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# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

# THESIS

**MÉRIDA INITIATIVE AND EFFECTIVENESS: AN ANALYSIS OF SUPPLY–SIDE POLICY**

by

Michael C. Hughes

June 2013

Thesis Advisor: Arturo Sotomayor
Second Reader: Maiah Jaskoski

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The drug war in Latin America has received an increasing amount of funds and resources since it began nearly four decades ago. Recent efforts by the United States and Mexico to combat illegal narcotics traffickers have gained increased attention in the wake of September 2001 terrorist attacks. Similar efforts by the United States have been tried in the past, particularly in Colombia, with varied levels of success. This increased level of attention runs in counterpoint to the continued vitality of the drug trade, as markets expand and consumption remains steady. Violence resulting from drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) in Mexico has produced an even greater sense of urgency for both nations to respond to this threat. The latest plan to combat DTOs and the drug trade, the Mérida Initiative, has gained high visibility and shows promise at providing an adequate solution.

This thesis will discuss the effectiveness of the Mérida Initiative and its ability to impact the trafficking of illegal narcotics in the United States and Latin America. Likewise, we will use the Mérida Initiative as an example of modern supply-side practices, to evaluate the overall effect of such actions affecting price and consumption of illegal narcotics.

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# MÉRIDA INITIATIVE AND EFFECTIVENESS: AN ANALYSIS OF SUPPLY–SIDE POLICY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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# ABSTRACT

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| ACI | Andean Counterdrug Initiative |
| CBP | Customs and Border Protection |
| CFR | Council on Foreign Relations |
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency |
| CIP | Center for International Policy |
| CRS | Congressional Research Service |
| DEA | Drug Enforcement Agency |
| DHS | Department of Homeland Security |
| DoD | Department of Defense |
| DoJ | Department of Justice |
| DoS | Department of State |
| DTO | Drug Trafficking Organization |
| FARC | Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia |
| FBI | Federal Bureau of Investigation |
| FY | Fiscal Year |
| GAO | Government Accountability Office |
| GOM | Government of Mexico |
| HA | Hectares |
| HR | House of Representatives |
| ICMP | Illicit Crop Monitoring Programme |
| INCLE | International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement |
| INL | International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs |
| LAWG | Latin American Working Group |
| MI | Mérida Initiative |
| NCP | National Consolidation Plan (in Colombia) |
| NSS | National Security Strategy |
| OAS | Organization of American States |
| ONDCP | Office of National Drug Control Policy |
| PGR | Office of the Attorney General (in Mexico) |
| PL | Public Law |

| | |
|---|---|
| PRI | Institutional Revolutionary Party (in Mexico) |
| SIEDO | Assistant Attorney General's Office for Special Investigations on Organized Crime (in Mexico) |
| SS | Supply-Side |
| SSP | National Police (in Mexico) |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNODC | United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime |
| U.S. | United States |
| USAID | U.S. Agency for International Development |
| WOLA | Washington Office on Latin America |

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

Latin America's war on drugs is steadily growing, especially over the past four decades, requiring increased U.S. military involvement and vast expenditures. Mexico, in particular, has been a recipient of increased U.S. military aid. From 2008 to 2010, the U.S. allocated $1.3 billion for military funding, humanitarian aid, and civic assistance through a counternarcotics program known as the Mérida Initiative (MI).[1] The U.S. continues to contribute to the MI by providing funds and resources for the purchase of modernized helicopters and scanning technology for border crossings ($310 million in 2011 and $290 million requested for 2012).[2] Focused spending on the MI, between 2007–2008 and 2009–2010, shows increased resolve to combat the drug trafficking problem, as the total funds allocated nears $2 billion.[3] Yet, in spite of increased bilateral efforts to deter drug traffickers through U.S. military aid, global levels of drug consumption remain high.[4] According to the *United Nations World Drug Report*, global consumption of illicit substances grew from as many as 250 million users in 2007, to as many as 300 million users in 2010. These numbers indicate that as much as six percent of the population aged 15–64 used illegal drugs during those years.[5] This, in turn, raises the question that this thesis addresses: Has the MI been an effective tool to increase drug prices and reduce narcotic consumption?

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1 "Merida Initiative the United States has Provided Counternarcotics and Anticrime Support but Needs Better Performance Measures: Report to Congressional Requesters." U.S. Government Accountability Office, 11.

2 U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation the Mérida Initiative and Beyond, by Clare R. Seelke and, Kristin M. Finkle, CRS Report R41349 (Washington, DC: Office of Congressional Information and Publishing, January, 14, 2013).

3 Clare R. Seelke, C. R. Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues (Washington, DC: DIANE Publishing, 2010).

4 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, World Drug Reports 2012. Annual World Drug Report (New York: United Nations Publication Sales, 2012), 7.

5 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, World Drug Reports 2009. Annual World Drug Report (New York: United Nations Publication Sales, 2009), 12; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, World Drug Reports 2012. Annual World Drug Report (New York: United Nations Publication Sales, 2012), 7.

## B. IMPORTANCE

A study of the MI and its effectiveness deserves our attention for a number of reasons. First, the initiative was specifically designed to deal with the supply side of drug trafficking. As outlined by Coletta Youngers and Eileen Rosin, supply-side (SS) approaches operate under the presumption that "reducing supply will make the illicit drug trade more dangerous and costly. This in turn is assumed to drive down production, drive up prices, and ultimately discourage… citizens from buying and using illicit drugs."[6] If advocates of SS policies are correct, the implementation of the MI should have had considerable effects on drug prices and narcotics consumption. This would thus serve as an indicator of effectiveness; we would then witness increased retail prices for illegal narcotics, as well as a decreased drug use globally, particularly in the United States.

Second, anti-drug plans, as the one proposed in Mexico, have been suggested for other countries as well, including those of Central America, the Caribbean, and the Andean states of South America.[7] Hence, an understanding of how the MI has operated in the past five years should provide a number of lessons learned about how SS policies affect (or not, as the case may be) drug prices and narcotics consumption. Additionally, in considering the MI's successes, we can see which methods have been most effective and why, allowing us to identify conditions for success or failure.

Finally, if measures such as the MI are ineffective at lowering consumption, then governments and policy makers should perhaps focus their attention on alternative policies. In fact, in recent years, the United Nations and key Latin American politicians have suggested the need to focus on decriminalizing consumption as an alternative policy to tackle drug consumption. A report by the Global Commission on Drug Policy (GCDP), which includes three former Latin American presidents (Fernando Enrique Cardoso, César Gaviria, and Ernesto Zedillo), considers that "the global war on drugs has failed,

6 Coletta Youngers and Eileen Rosin, "The U.S. "War on Drugs": Its Impact in Latin America and the Caribbean." In Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy (Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 2005).

7 Coletta Youngers and Eileen Rosin, Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy. Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 2005. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0419/2004014978.html.

with devastating consequences for individuals and societies around the world."[8] It outlines the need for a more comprehensive approach to drug trafficking and consumption, including greater attention to human (or demand-side) factors, such as decriminalization of non-violent usage, possible legal regulation of illicit drugs, and increased health and treatment opportunities for users.[9] In other words, if the findings of this study conclude that the MI has been ineffective, policy changes might be necessary in the future, including a complete overhaul of U.S. anti-drug policies.

## C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES

This thesis presents a qualitative analytical comparison of anti-drug measures over time by analyzing key elements of the MI and their effectiveness in the war on drugs. From the literature concerning this topic, three apparent competing hypotheses are assessed in this thesis. The first hypothesis ($H_1$) posits that if MI actions have been effective, results will show that its methods have increased the price of illegal drugs. The second hypothesis ($H_2$), complementary to $H_1$, follows that if the first hypothesis is true, data will show that increased prices of illegal drugs will decrease drug usage, both globally and in the United States. As stated by Renee Scherlen in "The Never-Ending Drug War," SS strategies employ a "law enforcement approach to deter or punish users, sellers, and producers of illicit drugs. The policy emphasizes incarceration, eradication, interdiction, extradition, and supply reduction. [It] focuses on supply; the [U.S.] government argues that market disruption and supply reduction will increase drug prices and decrease drug purity. The two elements combined should result in lower drug use among current users and a decrease in the number of new users."[10] As such, the first two hypotheses, if proven true, should demonstrate decreased usage and increased prices.

Alternatively, hypothesis three ($H_3$) provides a counter-perspective to the former hypotheses, positing that if MI actions have been ineffective, this study will see either

8 War on Drugs Report of the Global Commission on Drug Policy (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Global Commission on Drugs, 2011), 2.

9 Ibid.

10 Renee Scherlen, "The Never-Ending Drug War: Obstacles to Drug War Policy Termination." PS: Political Science & Politics 45, no. 01 (2012): 67.http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.nps.edu/10.1017/S1049096511001739, 1.

stable or reduced drug prices, as well as stable or increased illegal drug use and purity. This follows the form of the SS edict highlighted above, that greater supply reduction, interdiction, and penalties for drug use will decrease their prevalence among users, by applying the alternate outcome, in which the dependent variables (use and price) are negatively affected.

Problems concerning this topic are centered on the ability to accurately obtain detailed information regarding the usage and retail selling of illicit narcotics. As outlined in the 2012 *World Drug Report*, the availability of information is scarce, considering the clandestine nature of drug trafficking; however, data challenges can be mitigated by considering multiple reporting sources, from both supporting and critical contributors to this debate.[11] In researching this issue, I anticipated some conflict between supportive and opposing information regarding SS focused anti-drug measures. I also counted on the counterpoint provided by each side, in order to better examine the overall situation and provide greater legitimacy to analyzing each hypothesis.

## D. LITERATURE REVIEW

The body of literature produced concerning the topic of anti-drug efforts and policies can be loosely categorized into two groups. The first group contains scientists and writers—from within and external to the U.S. government—who view the war on drugs as a major failure that should be readdressed or even abandoned. Scholars taking this approach tend to focus on the inability of policies to counteract the rising use of drugs, their continued prevalence in consumption markets, and decreased prices over time. This group seeks to empower alternatives to SS methods to more effectively target the larger problems posed by drug use, including crime, public insecurity, and health issues. The second group is largely comprised by proponents who are directly affiliated with the U.S. government or its allies. This group justifies increased resources and funding for current policies, citing figures such as the annual number of drug crops eradicated and shipments seized. This group sees the statistics provided by eradication, fumigation, and interdiction as evidence of successful policies that should be continued.

11 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, World Drug Report 2012 (New York: United Nations, 2012), 13.

Historically, multiple programs were attempted in Latin America to combat the threat posed by the trafficking of illegal narcotics. In particular, these programs relied on SS approaches. As noted by Coletta Youngers, this refers to the "presumption that reducing supply will make the illicit drug trade more dangerous and costly. This in turn is assumed to drive down production, drive up prices, and ultimately discourage U.S. citizens from buying and using illicit drugs."[12] Such programs have been attempted in Bolivia, Colombia, the Caribbean, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru, with various consequences, many of them unintended.

These programs were originally spurred by increased U.S. influence. Beginning with the administration of President Richard Nixon, the U.S. sought to combat the perceived threat posed by illegal drug consumption and labeled drug use as a national security problem.[13] The first major international cooperative effort to fight drugs was launched under President Jimmy Carter (1977–1981), working with Colombian President Julio Cesar Turbay (1978–1982) to frame the drug war within a law enforcement structure.[14] In Colombia, the strategy focused on aerial fumigation and manual eradication of illicit narcotics crops to target the source of drugs, embodying the ideals of a SS approach. Additionally, this policy placed emphasis on directing police forces against the threat posed by traffickers. This precedent has been further expanded upon and largely abandoned throughout Latin America, as increased militarization of police forces has been seen as necessary in the face of adaptive transnational organized crime (TOC). This relationship was the first in a succession of policies between the United States and Latin American countries that introduced manual eradication, aerial fumigation, and illegal narcotics interdiction. This foundation was built during the administration of President George H. W. Bush (1989–1993) in the form of the Andean

12 Coletta Youngers and Eileen Rosin, "The U.S. "War on Drugs": Its Impact in Latin America and the Caribbean," in Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy (Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 2005), 3.

13 Eva Bertram, Drug War Politics: The Price of Denial (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 3–8. update all book footnotes

14 Coletta Youngers and Eileen Rosin, "The U.S. "War on Drugs": Its Impact in Latin America and the Caribbean." In Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy, 1–13 (Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 2005, 103.

Counterdrug Initiative (ACI), which focused on cocaine (the principally trafficked drug of the era) "source countries" of Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru.[15] The Clinton administration (1993–2000) gave further support to the ACI, specifically working with President Andrés Pastrana (1998–2002) to create Plan Colombia, which was designed to target the increased coca cultivation in Colombia. There, production shifted from initial primary producers in Bolivia and Peru, because of eradication campaigns and increased interdiction.[16] This "balloon effect," wherein pressure applied to coca production areas in Bolivia and Peru forced cultivation into neighboring Colombia, resulted in a shift of coca production, which allowed Colombian cartels to increase their cocaine trade exponentially, including expanding trade routes into Mexico.[17] Plan Colombia specifically, and U.S. counterdrug policies in general, were eventually expanded by Pastrana's successor, Alvaro Uribe Velez (2002–2010) and U.S. president George W. Bush (2001–2008). Each administration faced grave threats to national security, as posed by insurgents (FARC in Colombia) and terrorists (Al Qaeda in the United States). The 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States caused a reshaping of national security perspective that included TOCs in the category of terrorism.[18] As such, both nations began focusing on applying military means to drug trafficking problems. To Colombia, this meant great access to U.S. resources for counterinsurgency and anti-drug efforts; to the United States, this meant a greater need to extinguish narcotics trafficking as a means to eroding international terrorist organizations.[19] In the following years, the elimination of drug cartels in these "source countries" opened a vacuum into which Mexican cartels have sprung, fomenting their power bases abroad, as well as at home, and creating yet another partner in the U.S. War on Drugs: Mexico.

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15 Congressional Budget Office. Andean Initiative: Objectives and Support. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 1994, 13.

16 Beatriz Acevedo, Dave Bewley-Taylor, Coletta Youngers, Ten Years of Plan Colombia: an Analytic Assessment, Briefing Paper no. sixteen, The Beckley Foundation Drug Policy Programme, September 2008, 2.

17 Ibid., 3.

18 White House Administrative Office, "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America." U.S. Government Printing Office, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf.

19 Report, International Crisis Group, Colombia: President Uribe's Democratic Security Policy, November 13, 2003.

The MI was an international program launched by the United States to work with Mexico's government and police forces; it was intended to address the rising tide of perceived threat from organized crime in the realm of illegal drug trafficking. The program was signed by former President George W. Bush and Mexican President Felipe Calderon (2006–2012) in the fall of 2007, but did not place actual forces on the ground in Mexico until 2008. In particular, the aftermath of terrorist attacks in September 2011 prompted the U.S. government to view the relationship with its southern neighbor in a new light, considering potential connections between terrorist organizations seeking to harm the United States and the capital involved in organized crime, with particular respect to the illegal narcotics trade. While the MI includes efforts to aid Central American nations, including the Dominican Republic and Haiti, it focuses primarily on Mexico. The MI was spearheaded by the U.S. Department of State (DoS), but following actions in U.S. government caused spin-off programs by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security as well as the Department of Justice.[20] Similar programs, aimed at securing the southwestern U.S. border against trafficking organizations, have largely been supplemental efforts coordinated under the guise of and alongside the MI, effectively using avenues initially paved in the 1970s to allow the MI to advance U.S. anti-narcotics efforts in the present.

When taken as a whole, this group of counterdrug policies and initiatives has many shared assumptions and traits, centered on continual U.S. influence. First, these plans share a logic that equates drug trafficking to be a national security threat. Every U.S. administration, from presidents Nixon to Obama, promoted the idea that illegal drug consumption was an element that eroded the fabric of the nation, economically, morally, or otherwise, including the reduction of public welfare (via usage affecting social norms in the Nixon era, or providing terrorist support in the new millennium). U.S. officials have been able to pair this perspective alongside similar viewpoints, as evidenced in Bolivia, Colombia, and Mexico. Secondly, these policies make the assumption that this threat can be nullified by focusing on SS approaches. This preponderance of resources

20 United States Government Accountability Office, Mérida Initiative: The United States Has Provided Counternarcotics and Anticrime Support but Needs Better Performance Measures: Report to Congressional Requesters (Washington, DC: U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, 2010).

and policies has focused on the targeted reduction of drug supply elements and higher penalties for usage, in order to provide for a lessened instance of availability, and thereby lower consumption overall. Lastly, by largely adopting the SS approach outright, this shared logic leaves little, if any, room for the consideration of alternative policies. This results in an end state akin to the proverbial 'all the eggs in one basket,' wherein applying only one course of action does not guarantee success. When taken in total, and considered historically, it is possible to see that these policies have largely been reiterations of their predecessors, with evolutionary changes that increased not only the scope of the War on Drugs, but the depth of funding and type of resources allocated for its continued execution. In essence, regardless of the country partnered with the United States at the time, these policies present a framework that emphasizes the supply side of the drug trade and enhances the associated military-based means to combat it, leaving little possibility for alternate considerations.

Critics of this approach cite recurring, shared inconsistencies among the major SS policies, presenting arguments that highlight pitfalls and question such policies, all while offering alternative courses of action. Critics' comments are mainly focused around five major points: (1) SS policies contain ineffective measures of performance, (2) current measures of effectiveness are unrealistic, (3) SS policies do not account for the negative, unintended consequences of drug trafficking, (4) SS policies do not meet their stated objectives, and (5) no consideration is given to alternative policies.

First, authors state that current anti-drug policies lack proper mechanisms for evaluation and feedback regarding their effectiveness, which is a crucial item in assessing true progress. Specifically, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports that current measures of performance for U.S.-based anti-drug policies in Latin America lack the ability to effectively assess ongoing efforts. It states that the policies' "strategic documents lack certain key elements that would facilitate accountability and management. For example, its strategic documents do not include outcome performance measures that indicate progress toward achieving strategic goals. In addition, [the U.S. Department of] State has not developed a comprehensive set of timelines for all expected deliveries, though it plans to provide additional equipment and training in both Mexico

and Central America."[21] In other words, the governing documents for these policies do not include measurable progress markers, nor do they indicate a framework in which these measures should be timely achieved, instead simply give vague wording to the sentiment that future international support will be afforded. Additionally, as evidenced by Rachel Nelid, Renee Scherlen, Coletta Youngers, and Eileen Rosen, SS programs have an innate tendency for little oversight or measures for accountability.[22] This lack of capacity for administration within the programs causes gross consequences, including human rights violations and provides no meter by which U.S. Congress can ascertain the effectiveness of these programs.

Second, SS delves into the premise that current measures of effectiveness are unrealistic. Reports show that the reporting agencies in the War on Drugs rely heavily on the statistics concerning the amount of land annually eradicated and the number and size of seizures. Critics argue that the reliance on such measures to proclaim achievement of policy objectives shows a very narrowly constrained vision of true effectiveness in anti-drug policy.[23] Specifically, the early trend of U.S. government agencies to report eradicated *hectares* (ha) of land associated with drug crop production showed inaccurate reporting of actual crops affected by such tactics.[24] Even when considering sources that should be removed from U.S. government influence, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), we can see that its best efforts to report on successfully eradicated crops still contain elements of questionable bias, since a majority of the *World Drug Report* figures are taken from U.S. agencies or their affiliates in partner nations.[25]

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21 United States Government Accountability Office, Mérida Initiative: The United States Has Provided Counternarcotics and Anticrime Support but Needs Better Performance Measures: Report to Congressional Requesters (Washington, DC: U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, 2010), 2.

22 Rachel Nelid. "U.S. Police Assistance and Drug Control Policies." In Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy, edited by Youngers, Coletta and Eileen Rosin, 61–98. Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 2005; Renee Scherlen. "The Never-Ending Drug War: Obstacles to Drug War Policy Termination." PS: Political Science & Politics 45, no. 01 (2012): 67. doi:10.1017/S1049096511001739.; Coletta Youngers and Eileen Rosin. "The U.S. "War on Drugs": Its Impact in Latin America and the Caribbean." In Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy, 1–13. Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 2005.

23 Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress, U.S. Drug Policy: At What Cost? Moving Beyond the Self-Defeating Supply-Control Fixation. 2008.

24 Ibid., 4.

25 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, World Drug Report 2012. New York: United Nations, 2012.

As discussed by Ramirez, Stanton and Walsh, the success of a heavy fumigation strategy in Colombia was "dubious" at best.[26] In their work, they postulate that reports of U.S.-Colombian success in eradication efforts in 2002–2003 failed to consider the "balloon effect" (mentioned above) and did little to nullify production efforts, as Colombia remained the "largest coca-growing country in the world."[27]

The third point speaks to the unintended consequences of SS policies, citing these results as creating more harm than good, specifically to the environment, human rights, and the inhabitant farmers themselves. John Walsh, as Senior Associate for the Andes and Drug Policy at the Washington Office on Latin America, provided testimony to the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress in 2008, shedding light onto some of these pitfalls.[28] In his statement, Walsh highlights the fact that current SS policies fail to account for the resilient nature of crop production and the lack of feasible alternatives. He says that forced eradication only combats the immediate problem of a current drug crop, leaving farmers with no suitable alternative to plant instead. He refers to a UNODC report which recommends "ensuring that eradication is not undertaken until small farmer households have viable and sustainable livelihoods and interventions are properly sequenced."[29] In essence, forced eradication only removes a single instance of crops from play, from the farmer's perspective, leaving him with little alternative but to replant another crop soon thereafter. In the face of no alternatives, farmers are forced to remain a link in the chain of drug cultivation and will do so until a more feasible crop is made available. This begs the question of what crop will provide the same level of financial gain to a farmer.

In addition to failing to provide alternative crops, this approach fosters other problems concerning farmers, namely forced displacement, health risks, and

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26 Maria Lemus, Kimberly Stanton, and John Walsh, "Colombia: A Vicious Circle of Drugs and War." In Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy, edited by Youngers, Coletta and Eileen Rosin, 99–142. Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 2005.

27 Ibid., 112–13.

28 Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress, U.S. Drug Policy: At What Cost? Moving Beyond the Self-Defeating Supply-Control Fixation. 2008.

29Ibid., 6.

environmental deterioration. As highlighted by a 2005 U.S. Congressional Research Service report shows that agencies in France, China and the United States found that many of the chemical components contained in herbicide fumigation sprays were devastatingly harmful not only to plant life, but also to human placental cells and wildlife, raising questions to their feasibility in for use in inhabited areas.[30] Additional reports by the Latin American Working Group (LAWG) and Ramirez Lemus, Stanton and Walsh provide complementary evidence that aerial fumigation has resulted in a rise in complaints by farmers regarding health complaints and forced displacement.[31] Ramirez Lemus, et al., cite reports by the Colombian Council for Human Rights and Displacement which "show estimates that in 2001 and 2002 alone, fumigation led to the displacement of more than 75,000 people nationwide," further bolstering the impact of unintended consequences associated with SS tactics.[32]

This brings us to the fourth source of criticism regarding unintended consequences of SS programs; namely human rights abuses. Multiple authors show that historically, counterdrug policies have provided little measures to ensure that international human rights norms were observed by military and law enforcement personnel.[33] For instance, increased participation of military forces in internal counterinsurgency operations in Colombia combined with the inclusion of drug production and trafficking under the umbrella of national security, produced a system in

30 Connie Veillette and Carolina Navarrete-Frías, Library of Congress, and Congressional Research Service, Drug Crop Eradication and Alternative Development in the Andes. Variation: Major Studies and Issue Briefs of the Congressional Research Service. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2005, 11–12.

31 Latin American Working Group, Going to Extremes: The U.S.-Funded Aerial Eradication Program in Colombia. Washington, DC: Latin America Working Group, 2004; Lemus, Maria C. R., Kimberly Stanton, and John Walsh. "Colombia: A Vicious Circle of Drugs and War." In Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy, edited by Youngers, Coletta and Eileen Rosin, 99–142. Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 2005. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0419/2004014978.html.

32 Maria Lemus, Kimberly Stanton, and John Walsh, "Colombia: A Vicious Circle of Drugs and War." In Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy, edited by Youngers, Coletta and Eileen Rosin, 99–142. Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 2005, 118–19.

33 Coletta Youngers and Eileen Rosin, Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy. Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 2005. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0419/2004014978.html,1–61.

which military forces were provided funding and autonomy, but few control measures.[34] Additionally, a report by the CRS, authored by June Beittel, shows that increased militarization of Mexican police forces, operating in counterdrug capacities, rendered higher instances of human rights abuses in 2007–09.[35] Further reports by Human Rights Watch, an international non-governmental organization that specializes in revealing human rights abuses, published a 2009 report detailing over seventeen cases in which more than seventy Mexican citizens were brutalized at the hands of the military, including rape, torture, and forced disappearances.[36]

Furthermore, critics have argued that the stated objectives for anti-drug policies have not been met, and yet these policies persist. One poignant example is found in Renee Scherlen's aforementioned work *The Never-Ending Drug War*, in which she defines drug war policy termination as "the deliberate conclusion or cessation of government policies and programs related to the prohibitionist approach to drug use; the continuation of prohibition but with a harm reduction emphasis would be considered partial termination."[37] Following the line of thought established by U.S. SS policy, Scherlen finds that instead of price increase and consumption decrease (the delineated objectives defined by U.S. national drug strategies), the opposite has in fact occurred. Additional research examined in "Drug War Politics: the Price of Denial" shows that not only has consumption increased in the United States, but the street price of illicit drugs has steadily declined, while purity has increased from the late 1970s through the early

34 Maria Lemus, Kimberly Stanton, and John Walsh, "Colombia: A Vicious Circle of Drugs and War." In Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy, edited by Youngers, Coletta and Eileen Rosin, 99–142. Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 2005, 122–124.

35 June S. Beittel, Library of Congress and Congressional Research Service. "Mexico's Drug-Related Violence." Congressional Research Service, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40582.pdf, 14.

36 Human Rights Watch, Uniform Impunity: Mexico's Misuse of Military Justice to Prosecute Abuses in Counternarcotics and Public Security Operations, April 2009. Available at: http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/mexico0409web.pdf.

37 Renee Scherlen, "The Never-Ending Drug War: Obstacles to Drug War Policy Termination." PS: Political Science & Politics 45, no. 01 (2012): 67. doi: 10.1017/S1049096511001739, 69.

1990s.[38] The vast difference between stated objectives and achieved results leaves critics questioning the validity of continuing such policies, in the face of pointedly contrary data.

The final point of contention for SS programs is fairly straightforward: it allows no room for alternative methods. This contention argues that anti-drug proponents are far too invested in the logic of reducing supply (via eradication and interdiction) and have become entrenched in their position, to the extent that other potential avenues of progress are largely ignored. Even in instances where methods that did not involve eradication or interdiction were specifically highlighted in anti-drug plans, the resulting funds allocated for these policy aspects was far less than the direct action counterdrug operations. For example, in 2008 GAO reported that for Plan Colombia, "since fiscal year 2000, [U.S. Departments of] State and Defense provided nearly $4.9 billion to the Colombian military and National Police… [but U.S. Departments of] State and Justice, and USAID have provided $1.3 billion for… social, economic, and justice sector programs."[39] This is ironic, considering that the U.S. DoS "has primary responsibility for coordinating the Mérida Initiative."[40] Other counterdrug plans, including the MI, have been cited as further evidence of proponents clinging to a focus on eradication and interdiction. A 2011 policy briefing from the Center for International Policy (CIP) claims that despite an agreement between the United States and Mexico to shape MI efforts around four major pillars, including "dismantling criminal organizations, strengthening law enforcement institutions, building a '21st century border,' and building strong and resilient communities," the bulk of U.S. funding has been "channeled primarily to

38 Eva Bertram, Drug War Politics: The Price of Denial. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/bios/ucal051/95019168.html,11–14,265–268.

39 United States Government Accountability Office, Joseph R. Biden, Jess T. Ford and United States Congress Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, "Plan Colombia Drug Reduction Goals were Not Fully Met, but Security has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance: Report to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate." U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, 1.

40 Jess T. Ford, United States Congress House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere and United States Government Accountability Office, "Mérida Initiative the United States Needs Better Performance Measures for its Counternarcotics and Anticrime Support Efforts: Testimony before the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives." U.S. Government. Accountability Office, 2.

support the first two 'pillars' both in Mexico and Central America."[41] In discussing two of the largest anti-drug policies, critics propose that the bulk of funding has been directed towards the more military route of affecting the drug trade, even in policies that have stated explicitly that the respective program will include civil sector action.

Proponents of SS policies are far easier to group. On the whole, this camp relies upon the evidence of continued eradication and interdiction statistics to provide ongoing funding for such programs. In a statement before the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Human Rights and the Law, David T. Johnson (Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs) provided the following testimony concerning the MI: "Mexico's recent high-profile seizures and arrests are clear signs that this effort is moving in the right direction," and that "the lessons learned from our experiences in Colombia… are reflected in our efforts in Mexico."[42] Johnson's relief, William R. Brownfield, made similar remarks to the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, beginning his testimony by listing three major successes of the MI:

> 1. Since 2009, more than 33 high level cartel leaders have been removed or arrested. This compares with one in the preceding six years.
>
> 2. Thanks to Mérida Initiative, the Mexican government now has 14 additional helicopters, hundreds of sophisticated non-intrusive inspection suites of equipment, and more than 100 canine teams.
>
> 3. More than 52,000 Mexican police and prosecutors have received some professional training under the Mérida Initiative.
>
> By the end of this year, we will have delivered more than $900 million worth of equipment and training to Mexico, with more than $500 million

41 Tom Barry, Aiding Insecurity: Four Years of Mexico's Drug War and Merida Initiative: Center for International Policy (CIP), 2011, 1.

42 Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Human Rights and the Law, Drug Enforcement and the Rule of Law: Mexico and Colombia. 2010.

> delivered this year alone. There is no doubt in my mind, ladies and gentlemen, that the United States is better and safer today thanks to our support for the Mérida Initiative.[43]

Such instances show that governmental and official firmly believe that ongoing operations are effective and merit further long-term consideration. Additionally, in 2006 the DoS Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) released the *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, which stated that "cutting off [the] supply [of illicit drugs] has been and will continue to be our primary international narcotics goal," owing to the success of "coordinated international enforcement programs [that] limited drug crop expansion, strengthened interdiction efforts, destroyed processing facilities, and weakened major trafficking organizations."[44] The same agency released a more recent report in 2012 that stated similar support for SS measures, citing multiple successes in Latin America, specifically a reported fourteen and seven percent reduction in coca plants and cocaine in Colombia, respectively, and the arrest of "10,979 Mexican nationals and 218 foreigners on drug-related charges, including 22 high-profile drug traffickers.[45] The 2012 report also touted the successes of U.S. DEA and U.S. Coast Guard antidrug operations, listing the victories in over ten pages of material.[46] The second point extracted from SS patrons reveals that many have admitted the inclusion of demand-side elements, despite critics' contention that such measures have received only the vaguest level of attention. In multiple sources, including the aforementioned *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, as well as reports to Congress, the inclusion of additional measures, besides eradication and interdiction, are

43 House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere and House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations and Management, Is Merida Antiquated? Part Two: Updating U.S. Policy to Counter Threats of Insurgency and Narco-Terrorism. 2011.

44 United States Dept. of State and United States Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, "International Narcotics Control Strategy Report for 2006." International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 1, (2006), 11.

45 United States Dept. of State and United States Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, "International Narcotics Control Strategy Report for 2012." International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 1, (2012), 173, 318.

46 Ibid., 43–57.

necessary.[47] Even previously discussed testimonies by highly placed federal agents mention successes in implementing professionalized education. Nonetheless, thus far, it appears that the major dialogue from sponsors of this approach holds eradication and interdiction as the principal means to wage the war on drugs, and other forms of action are lesser by comparison.

In sum, the totality of information garnered from the research shows a marked difference between the predominant opinions of scientists and officials regarding SS policies. It is notable that certain concepts, such as alternative measures, like drug treatment and public health awareness, are commented on by both camps, but in very different lights. While critics argue for less invasive courses of action and reshaping current policies to at least include accountability measures, it appears that proponents see these same topics as peripheral elements at best. This thesis will seek to examine both camps, in order to more accurately portray the landscape of drug policy and shed light on the merits of both sides.

## E. METHODS AND SOURCES

This thesis will conduct a qualitative and quantitative analysis of SS anti-drug policies and practices in Latin America, specifically examining the development of programs such as the MI. Particular attention will be paid to the MI and its comparison to historical practices, to see how this policy has been shaped, as well as how the implementation has affected its success to increase drug prices and reduce consumption. By focusing on the MI, specifically in the two periods of 2007–08 and 2009–10, it will be possible to ascertain the effectiveness of the campaign in stemming drug consumption and increasing narcotics' street prices. The first period will serve as the basis for drug price, purity, supply and consumption, representing the early years of the MI and its first

47 United States Dept. of State and United States Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, "International Narcotics Control Strategy Report for 2006." International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 1 (2006); United States Dept. of State and United States Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. "International Narcotics Control Strategy Report for 2012." International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 1 (2012); Clare R. Seelke, Latin America and the Caribbean: Illicit Drug Trafficking and U.S. Counterdrug Programs DIANE Publishing, 2010.

steps to affect the drug market. During the second period, the MI was fully operational and research during this timeframe should provide ample evidence of its impact upon drug trafficking.

I will utilize resources outlined in the literature review, including governmental resources, data generated by international organization, as well as primary and secondary sources from reputable organizations, including the U.S. government and its agencies, and the United Nations and associated Latin American non-governmental organizations. I will also rely on secondary sources, including work by peer-reviewed scholars and reputable academic organizations, such as the Washington Office for Latin America, the Council on Foreign Relations and the RAND Corporation.

## F. THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis is structured into three chapters. Chapter II, which follows from this introductory chapter, will offer a historical background analysis of SS anti-drug effort in Latin America, specifically focusing on the role played by the United States. Chapter III will examine the ways in which the MI elements were implemented, including funding, timeliness, and successes and failures of the program. Where Chapter II provides a refined overview to the topic of counter-narcotics policy through the MI, Chapter III brings together the elements of the MI's execution and displays which areas merit future consideration and which should be excluded. The final chapter summarizes the main findings of this study and offers specific policy prescriptions for the future.

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# II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND ORIGINS OF THE MÉRIDA INITIATIVE

## A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the political environment preceding the Mérida Initiative (MI) and provides a brief timeline of Congressional discussions, hearings, and testimony leading up to its creation. It provides an analysis of how the (MI) was shaped, including the impact of preceding events and political discourse both in Mexico and the United States. Understanding the origins of the MI is essential in answering the major research question; namely, how effective has the program been at affecting drug prices and narcotic consumption. The MI origins are found in anti-narcotics efforts by the United States to combat "organizations [that] constitute a threat to regional security and to U.S. national security."[48] As stated in the previous chapter, the program was initially built upon by the experience of the United States in combatting drug trafficking in Colombia and the Andean Region, a largely supply-side (SS) focused campaign. As outlined by Coletta Youngers and Eileen Rosin, SS approaches operate under the presumption that "reducing supply will make the illicit drug trade more dangerous and costly. This in tum is assumed to drive down production, drive up prices, and ultimately discourage… citizens from buying and using illicit drugs."[49] However, U.S. policy then focused more attention on its southwestern border than in previous years, and as a result, other concepts were included in the new MI design. Specifically, it established that border security and community resources were necessary to combat drug trafficking. The MI was specifically designed to address the rising threat of organized crime. This took place in the aftermath of 9/11 terrorist attacks, which prompted the American government to reassess its relationship with Mexico in a new light, considering the potential connections between terrorist organizations and organized crime, especially illegal narcotics trade.

48 Tom Barry, Aiding Insecurity: Four Years of Mexico's Drug War and Mérida Initiative, CIP Policy Brief, July 1, 2011, 1.

49 Coletta Youngers and Eileen Rosin, "The U.S. "War on Drugs": Its Impact in Latin America and the Caribbean." In Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy, 1–13. Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 2005.

As indicated in the previous chapter, former presidents George W. Bush and Felipe Calderon signed the MI in the fall of 2007. However, coordination to place Mexican agents and U.S. supporting personnel on the ground did not occur until 2008. The United States Department of State (DOS) provided overall responsibility for the campaign, but elements of the plan, including appropriation account administration and implementation, fell to other departments including the Department of Defense and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), to be discussed later. Additionally, complementary programs such as the Improved Border Inspection program and the Asset Forfeiture Program have been created in the overall contribution to the MI, but are administered by their parent agencies, the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice, respectively.[50]

In this chapter, I will provide a brief historical analysis of the MI. First, I will place particular emphasis on how similar SS programs, such as Plan Colombia, provided a template and framework for the U.S.-Mexico initiative. Second, I discuss how U.S. anti-terrorist strategies in the aftermath of 9/11 prompted an increased interest in safeguarding the southern border. This sudden interest in border security, as evidenced in Congressional testimonies, also helped influence and shape the MI. Finally I examine how the policy preferences of the Calderon administration ultimately affected the structure and configuration of the U.S.-Mexico anti-drug plan. My overall goal is simply to identify the political background conditions under which the MI was created, which should then allow me to assess its impact and effectiveness.

## B. THE IMPACT OF PLAN COLOMBIA

No examination of the MI would be complete without a discussion of its SS predecessor, Plan Colombia, under the Andean Counterdrug Initiative (ACI). Likewise, a basic comparison of the two campaigns is necessary to understand where the two plans differ. The presence of Plan Colombia in U.S. counternarcotics policy greatly contributed to the shaping and eventual execution of the MI. The impetus for Plan Colombia

50 United States Department of State, "The Mérida Initiative U.S. – SICA Dialogue on Security December 11–12, 2008 Washington, DC." United States Department of State, accessed 03/11, 2013, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PCAAB861.pdf.

stemmed from increased coca cultivation in the 1990s, as production shifted from initial primary producers in Peru and Bolivia, because of eradication campaigns and increased interdiction. This resulted in the aforementioned "balloon effect," wherein pressure applied to reduce coca production areas forced cultivation into neighboring Colombia.[51] As a result of this shift in coca production, Colombian cartels increased their cocaine trade exponentially. Shifting away from protective measures on agriculture, open market policies in the 1990s forced subsistence farmers to focus on rising economic enterprises in coca growth.[52] As the illicit drug industry expanded its global reach, other affected nations took a larger interest in trade sources, particularly the United States. Specifically, Washington strengthened its resolve towards abolishing drug trafficking and created a shared perspective of understanding with Colombia (later known as Plan Colombia) regarding the impact of the drug trade. The threat posed by drug trafficking prompted both nations to cooperate and propose a common framework for action. Under this shared vision, the two nations implemented SS policies in the Andean region to scour the terrain for cultivation sites and eradicate crops.

Plan Colombia was designed after years of increased bilateral tension with Bogota, stemming mostly from the controversial certification process. In fact, the United States revoked Colombia's certification as a nation with stable mechanisms to withstand and remove corruption from its officials in 1995 and withdrew $35 million in anti-narcotics funding. The decertification process forced Colombian officials, particularly incumbent President Andrés Pastrana (1998–2002), to reconsider their efforts to present a solid national anti-drug stance.[53] Pastrana thus approached the U.S. government and suggested a new course of action to Washington. Initially Colombia proposed the Plan as a peace initiative designed to de-escalate conflict between Colombian security forces and

51 Beatriz Acevedo, Dave Bewley-Taylor and Coletta Youngers, Ten Years of Plan Colombia: an Analytic Assessment, Briefing Paper no. sixteen, The Beckley Foundation Drug Policy Programme, September 2008, 2.

52 Ibid.

53 U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, Plan Colombia: A Progress Report, by Connie Veillette, CRS Report RL32774 (Washington, DC: Office of Congressional Information and Publishing, June 22, 2005).

the guerrilla. The overarching goal was to facilitate the development of "productive processes, the promotion of human capital, the construction of a peace infrastructure, the strengthening of social capital and the promotion of environmental sustainability," [54] with minimal inclusion of military means. Nevertheless, the United States wanted a SS campaign, focused on interdiction and eradication, and pressured Colombia to adjust its demands. As such, U.S. anti-drug advocates and advisors visited Colombia to investigate the situational feasibility of implementing Pastrana's fledgling Plan Colombia. Upon completing the assessment, they recommended Pastrana's advisors to increase the scope of the proposal to include a wider linkage with larger guerrilla and drug trafficking organization strategy, including a notable increase in military participation.[55] Hence, Plan Colombia or *Plan for Peace, Prosperity and Strengthening of the State* (its official title), was born as a six-year strategy centered primarily on ending drug trafficking, with peripheral restoration of social and economic development.[56] The plan aligned with U.S. interests and was comprised of ten essential strategy elements for future execution: economic, fiscal/financial, military, judicial and human rights, counter-narcotics, alternative development, social participation, human development, peace, and international.[57] The plan effectively ensured that Colombia would receive long-term U.S. funding to combat insurgency and anti-drug efforts.[58] The trend of linking counter-guerrilla and anti-drug efforts continued into and through the first decade of the new millennium by Pastrana's successor, Alvaro Uribe Velez (2002–2010). Plan Colombia set a standard whereby anti-narcotics and counterinsurgency tactics were combined, leaving an important precedent for the MI. Uribe blamed guerrillas for the nation's economic disparity and public insecurity, allowing him to increase the presence of military forces

54 Beatriz Acevedo, Dave Bewley-Taylor and Coleta Youngers, Ten Years of Plan Colombia: an Analytic Assessment, Briefing Paper no. sixteen, The Beckley Foundation Drug Policy Programme, September 2008, 3.

55 Ibid., 3.

56 Plan Colombia: Plan for Peace, Prosperity, and the Strengthening of the State, United States Institute of Peace, Peace Agreements Digital Collection, 1999, http://www.usip.org/files/plan_colombia_101999.pdf

57 Ibid.

58 Coletta Youngers and Eileen Rosin, "Colombia: A Vicious Circle of Drugs and War." In Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy, 99–142. Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 2005. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0419/2004014978.html.

involved in the plan. In fact, Uribe revised the plan itself, changing its title to "Plan for Democratic Security," which de facto increased military means to combat insurgents, relying mostly on U.S. funds and resources.[59] Uribe's replacement, Juan Manuel Santos, took office in 2010, continuing his predecessor's work in combatting crime and drug trafficking.[60] He continued operations of Plan Colombia, which by now was simply referred to as the National Consolidation Plan (NCP). The NCP combines drug eradication efforts with a "whole-of-government approach" [61] towards ending insurgencies, further increasing militarization.

As stated earlier, Plan Colombia influenced U.S. anti-drug policies in Mexico.[62] At face value, Plan Colombia seems almost parochial in its SS approach to anti-drug actions, while the MI was designed to apply a more contemporary focus on illicit trafficking. In theory, the MI takes a less overt militarily inclined position, while Plan Colombia took a direct route to the military option with regard to achieving policy ends. Plan Colombia initially focused towards peace, with emphasis on cultural, economic, and social improvement and stability, but U.S. influence swayed its course before implementation, yielding current practices centered on interdiction and eradication. The MI applies effort across a broader front, including interdiction and military means, as well as control measures in the transportation, shipping, and border security elements. Mexican and U.S. leaders realized from Plan Colombia that interdiction and eradication efforts in Mexico would require complementary public welfare and infrastructural measures to fully engage the effects of illegal narcotics trafficking. Realizing the slanted focus of Plan Colombia, MI developers saw the opportunity to not only stifle drug trafficking at it source, but also impede its approaches to major markets external to

59 Report, International Crisis Group, Colombia: President Uribe's Democratic Security Policy, November 13, 2003.

60 U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, Colombia: Issues for Congress, by June S. Beittel, CRS Report RL32250 (Washington, DC: Office of Congressional Information and Publishing, November 28, 2012), 1.

61 Ibid., 2.

62 Philip K. Abbott, "The Merida Initiative: A Flawed Counterdrug Policy?" The Small Wars Journal 7, no. 1 (2011): 1–10

Mexico.[63] Additionally, the MI was designed to apply measures to heal societal causes for resorting to drug trafficking, including judicial reforms to eliminate corruption, as well as socio-cultural measures to combat the entrance of future generations into the drug trade.

Some of the lessons learned from Plan Colombia include time lag in effectiveness, the importance of addressing soft-side issues, and the unintended consequence of militarization and associated human rights abuses. From Plan Colombia, policy makers realized that it would take time to affect the production capital and power base of drug trafficking organizations.[64] Because Plan Colombia applied a heavy use of force in a short time, the MI was understood to be an initial investment in a much lengthier time frame.[65] Additionally, where Plan Colombia neglected to provide support for soft-side areas like "investment in social capital, infrastructure, and productive projects,"[66] the MI would pointedly include those items into its design.[67] Lastly, the United States and Mexico did not want to see a repeat of the human rights abuses committed by the military and paramilitary forces, as occurred in Colombia.[68] As a result, the MI specifically highlighted the need for Mexico to devote effort to ensure that international human rights norms were observed. These required efforts to provide human rights training for military and police personnel, as well as a review of all personnel found guilty of such violations and prosecution where applicable, including military units

63 United States Congress House Committee on Foreign Affairs. "Assessing the Merida Initiative: A Report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO), Serial no. 111–109, July 21, 2010, 111–2 Hearing, *." s.n.

64 Myles R. Frechette. Colombia and the United States - the Partnership: But what is the Endgame?. Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2007.

65 Felipe Calderon. "President Bush and President Calderón Participate in a Joint Press Availability." White House Office of the Press Secretary, accessed FEB 27, 2012,

http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2007/03/20070314–2.html.

66 Maria Lemus, Kimberly Stanton, and John Walsh. "Colombia: A Vicious Circle of Drugs and War." In Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy, edited by Youngers, Coletta and Eileen Rosin, 99–142. Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 2005. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0419/2004014978.html.

67 United States Congress House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Merida Initiative to Combat Illicit Narcotics and Reduce Organized Crime Authorization Act of 2008. 110. 2 sess. House Report 110–673(May 22, 2008): 110–673, Section 111.

68 Maria Lemus, Kimberly Stanton, and John Walsh. "Colombia: A Vicious Circle of Drugs and War." In Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy, edited by Youngers, Coletta and Eileen Rosin, 99–142. Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 2005. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0419/2004014978.html,122.

as a whole.[69] U.S. officials thought the unintended consequences of SS programs (which were notorious in Colombia) could be minimized in Mexico by imposing stricter guidelines. However, gross human rights violations were indeed committed in Mexico, in spite of the guidelines stated in the MI. The U.S.-Mexico plan, like its Colombian counterpart, lacked enforcement and accountability mechanisms.[70]

## C. CONGRESSIONAL/SENATE HEARINGS: THE UNITED STATES

Available documents from Congress allow us to see the overarching mindset that permeated the United States legislature leading up to the MI, and thereby we can surmise the ways in which the MI was shaped. These Congressional findings prior to MI's introduction reveal a prevalent environment that existed before the approval and resulting implementation of this plan, in which it is possible to see a rise in the attention garnered by counter-narcotics efforts in Mexico. Public documents published by Congress display an increasing sense of urgency to take action in the years following the September, 2001 terrorist attacks.[71] Specifically, Congressional reports confirm that counter-insurgency and combatting terrorist organizations were firmly correlated with counter-narcotics efforts abroad.[72] Indeed, U.S. response to terrorist activity prompted an increased interest in combatting narcotics. As early as late 2001, Congressional documents specifically cite the need for stronger measures to combat the two-fold issue of narcotics trafficking and terrorism.[73] Over $90 million were provided in Fiscal Year (FY) 2002 "for acquisition and other expenses associated with implementation and deployment of antiterrorist and illicit narcotics detection equipment along the United States-Mexico

69 United States Congress House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Merida Initiative to Combat Illicit Narcotics and Reduce Organized Crime Authorization Act of 2008. 110. 2 sess. House Report 110–673(May 22, 2008): 110–673, Section 114.

70 On the negative impact of the MI see Arturo C. Sotomayor, "Militarization in Mexico and its Implications," in Brian Bow and Arturo Santa Cruz (eds.) The State and Security in Mexico: Transformation and Crisis in Regional Perspective, (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 42–57.

71 Committee on the Judiciary. Protecting the Homeland: The President's Proposal for Reorganizing our Homeland Security Infrastructure. 107th Cong., 2nd sess., June,25, 2002.

72 National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, Public Law 109–163, 119 Stat. 3427 (JAN. 6, 2006): 1021.

73 Customs Border Security Act of 2001: United States Government Printing Office, 2002.

border, the United States-Canada border, and Florida and the Gulf Coast seaports."[74] Of the $90 million provided for the antiterrorist and counter-narcotics efforts, fifty-five percent ($49.604 million) went specifically to protect the U.S.-Mexico border.[75] The report continues, stating that the "Committee [on Ways and Means] is committed to giving Customs the resources needed to increase the overall level of Customs officers and Special Agents dedicated to countering terrorism, narcotics, and money laundering activities."[76] In 2002, a presidential proposal for reorganizing the U.S. homeland defense infrastructure foreshadowed future perceptions of Congress regarding terrorism, border security, and drug trafficking.[77] Congressional hearing testimonies specifically discuss the need to increase funds for counter-drug operations in order to reduce the terrorist threat.[78]

Furthermore, reports from legislative hearings from 2004 clearly indicate that congressional leaders supported measures to strengthen the southwestern border's defensive posture, putting particular emphasis on deterring and interdicting the flow of illegal drugs into the United States.[79] In a report released by the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, major security failures were identified as a result of the porous nature of the southwestern U.S. in particular, it was noted that the counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism programs lacked sufficient infrastructure, manning, technology, and intelligence to combat organized crime; thus suggesting the need for an improved, long-term strategy.[80] In 2005, Congress directed the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agencies to conduct risk assessments of all United States ports of entry for the purpose of "preventing the entry of terrorists, other

74 Customs Border Security Act of 2001: United States Government Printing Office, 2002,3.

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid.,18.

77 Committee on the Judiciary. Protecting the Homeland: The President's Proposal for Reorganizing our Homeland Security Infrastructure. 107th Cong., 2nd sess., June,25, 2002.

78 Ibid.

79 Jim Turner. Transforming the Southern Border: Providing Security & Prosperity in the Post-9/11 World: United States Congress House Select Committee on Homeland Security, 2004.

80 Ibid.

unlawful aliens, instruments of terrorism, narcotics, and other contraband into the United States."[81] Likewise, in 2006, Congress once again released more findings concerning the importance of increased counter-narcotics operations, specifically regarding the cultivation of positive relations within communities affected by drug trafficking. It cites a need for counter-narcotics agencies to nourish this relationship in order to effectively combat drug-trafficking organizations.[82] Hence, the U.S. Congress itself clearly connected anti-terrorist strategies with anti-narcotic policies, especially in the border. The 2006 Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act highlights the increased resolve of Congress to support ongoing measures by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to publish and execute the United States Southwest Border Counter-narcotics Strategy, specifically focused on "the [United States] Government's strategy for preventing the illegal trafficking of drugs across the international border between the United States and Mexico, including through ports of entry and between ports of entry on that border."[83] By officially directing the ONDCP to continue counter-narcotics operations and providing it the latitude to identify "resources required to enable the relevant National Drug Control Program agencies to implement that strategy," Congress displayed its commitment to escalating the U.S. national response to the perceived threat posed by drug trafficking.[84] The combination of the above reports and hearings show that the perceived level of effort required to combat drug trafficking and its associated links with terrorism were greatly increased in the minds of U.S. decision makers. By linking terrorism and drug trafficking, U.S. leaders constructed an environment wherein increased attention to one element (counter-terrorism) would garner greater support for the other (counter-narcotics) and vice versa.

81 Border Security and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2005: United States Government Printing Office, 2005.

82 Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 2006, Public Law 109–469, 120 Stat. 3503 (DEC. 29, 2006): 302.

83 Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 2006, Public Law 109–469, 120 Stat. 3503 (DEC. 29, 2006): 1110.

84 Ibid.

As such, Congress was primed to create a plan of action to provide a more comprehensive direct response to the threat posed by the illegal narcotics trade, leading to the creation of the MI.

## D. MEXICO'S POLICY PREFERENCES AND STRUCTURE OF THE MERIDA INITIATIVE

The impetus for the MI did not stem from unilateral U.S. efforts, but was greatly driven by Mexican leaders, beginning with President Vicente Fox (2000–2006). President Fox, the first democratically elected leader of Mexico after 75 years of authoritarian PRI-rule, took office in 2000, and quickly garnered approval from many Republicans in the U.S. Congress to assist him with anti-drug operations. His attitudes towards fighting "drug trafficking and money laundering made him appealing to Washington, as did the fact that he represented… a clean break from the long-entrenched and heavily corrupted PRI [in previous years]."[85] Fox quickly began to build a stronger U.S./Mexico relationship by forging stronger, less restricted trade access and greater ties to the United States. President Bush accepted Fox's invitation and met with him in San Cristobal, Mexico in February 2001, to discuss a "Partnership for Prosperity" that would enhance U.S. investment in Mexico.[86] This meeting began a dialogue between the two nations that would signal the start of increased cooperation and interaction, and would eventually pave the way for the MI. The two state leaders continued to discuss differences on larger issues like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), as well as politically sensitive issues like immigration. The progression of these discussions eventually led to policy changes in both nations and the creation of a "joint border security program, which included measures each country had refused to take in prior years."[87] These included

85 Russell Crandall. The United States and Latin America After the Cold War. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 233.

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid., 234.

Mexican concessions to "stop migrants before they crossed into hazardous [border crossing] regions,"[88] and U.S. agreements to address problems caused by its border policies.

The events of 9/11 did, however, affect U.S.-Mexico cooperative efforts, as Washington turned its attention to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. More importantly, the United States began to impose stricter controls on immigration and border security, creating both the Enhanced Border Security Act of 2002 and the Homeland Security Act.[89] Both items eroded the U.S./Mexico relationship, as the Bush administration rarely consulted these measures bilaterally with its Mexican counterpart. The relationship was further hindered by Mexico's refusal to support a U.S. resolution on the United Nations Security Council in 2003 to allow U.S. troops to enter Iraq.[90] Meanwhile in the United States, domestic demands for immigration legislation clashed with Mexico's expectations for an overhaul immigration reform. The friendly and mostly cordial relationship between the Bush and Fox administrations was ultimately affected and undermined by post-9/11 security concerns. As a result, discussions about enhanced anti-drug trafficking bilateral cooperation did not formally take off until President Felipe Calderon took office in Mexico, in 2006. Under Calderon, the "amigo" relationship was revitalized, as the interconnected nature of the two nations became highlighted in economic trade and cooperative security strategies.

The Calderon administration made a case by emphasizing the increased spike in drug-related crime and violence, especially in its northern border.[91] For instance, at least 8,000 deaths caused by organized crime were reported in 2007.[92] This highlighted the

88 Russell Crandall. The United States and Latin America After the Cold War. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 234.

89 Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002, Public Law 107–173, (2002): 116 stat. 543; Homeland Security Act of 2002, Public Law 107–296, (2002): 116 stat. 2135.

90 Russell Crandall. The United States and Latin America After the Cold War. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 236.

91 Sabrina Abu-Hamdeh. "The Merida Initiative: An Effective Way of Reducing Violence in Mexico?" Pepperdine Policy Review 4, no. 1 (2011): 5.

92 Committee on Foreign Affairs. Has Mérida Evolved? Joint Hearing before the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere and the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Twelfth Congress, First Session. 112th Cong., 1st sess., 2011, 8.

fear that conflict would spill over to the U.S.-side of the border.[93] In response, Mexican leaders began to take drastic action to reverse the violent trend. For example, President Felipe Calderon ordered 45,000 Mexican Army soldiers to join the effort to combat the illicit drug trade and restore public security during his first two years in office.[94] This internal fracturing caused by criminal organizations presented a situation to Mexico in which the ongoing impact of illegal narcotics necessitated a change in policy and practice. President Calderon sought to provide a more comprehensive response to the problem of the illicit drug trade by partnering with the United States. The result was an earnest effort by Mexico to actively involve the United States in its anti-drug campaign via a joint security framework. In this endeavor, Mexico would, for the first time since World War II, seek to collaborate militarily with the United States on equal footing, under an umbrella of shared responsibilities to eradicate the common threat posed by drug trafficking.

Under the Mexican diplomatic initiative, the presidents of Mexico and the United States met in Mérida, Yucatan, in March of 2007 and began discussions of a common anti-drug plan.[95] During those meetings, President Calderon declared that he was fully satisfied for how fruitful this meeting has been for both countries… We coincided in sharing our core responsibility, which now, more than ever, happened to be a shared responsibility."[96] The first draft of what would later be called the MI was publically released a few weeks after the bilateral talks in Mérida for legislative.[97] However, Congressional approval was not easy and the first draft of the MI faced increased opposition from both sides.

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93 "BBC News - Q&A: Mexico's Drug-Related Violence " , accessed 10/25/2012, 2012, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-10681249.

94 U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, Mexico's Drug-Related Violence, by June S. Beittel, CRS Report R40582 (Washington, DC: Office of Congressional Information and Publishing, May 27, 2009), 1.

95 "Joint U.S.-Mexico Communiqué." White House Office of the Press Secretary. press release, March 14, 2007, accessed 03/12, 2013, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2007/03/print/20070314–4.html.

96 Felipe Calderon, "President Bush and President Calderón Participate in a Joint Press Availability." White House Office of the Press Secretary, accessed FEB 27, 2012, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2007/03/20070314–2.html.

97 Ibid.

For instance, Washington wanted to impose conditions on the funding appropriations for the plan to ensure compliance with international norms regarding human rights. In particular, prerequisites for supplying U.S. funds to Mexico were required to be verified by the Office of the President before funds could be released.[98] These conditions included requirements to:

> 1) Ensure that "members and units of the armed forces and law enforcement agencies of the foreign country have not been involved in human rights violations."
>
> 2) Investigate and prosecute "any member of any government agency or entity receiving assistance under [the Mérida Initiative] who has been credibly alleged to have committed human rights violations on or after the date of the enactment of this Act."
>
> 3) Create commissions to conduct investigation and prosecution (if necessary) in reports of human rights abuses.[99]

These requirements were naturally opposed by Mexico, who saw this as an attempt to once again institutionalize a controversial "certification program for narcotics-producing and transit countries in Latin America."[100] Under certification, the U.S. President would certify that drug producing and transit nations in Latin America were indeed complying with requirements, including establishing systems to address and reduce human rights abuses, and associated institutional reforms.[101] Mexico perceived these conditions as an infringement to its sovereignty. For instance, Ruth Zavaleta, coordinator of the lower house of Congress for the leftist Party of the Democratic Revolution, rejected the plan, saying "We are the first ones to defend the idea that Mexico needs these reforms, along with advances in human rights… but the United States cannot make unilateral demands."[102] Bilateral negotiations resumed again in in

98 United States Congress House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Merida Initiative to Combat Illicit Narcotics and Reduce Organized Crime Authorization Act of 2008. 110. 2 sess. House Report 110–673(May 22, 2008): 110–673.

99 Ibid., Section 301.

100 Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives. A Review of the President's Certification Program for Narcotics-Reducing and Transit Countries in Latin America. 104th Cong., 2nd sess., March 7, 1996.

101 Ibid.

102 Laurence Iliff. "MEXICO - U.S. Conditions Threaten Anti-Drug Initiative - Congress Seeks Legal, Human Rights Reforms; Border Partner Says it's Return of 'Certification'." Dallas Morning News, the (TX),2008.

2008 to discuss the most controversial issues regarding the implementation of a joint anti-drug plan. The U.S. conceded to Mexican political demands, and the new draft clearly stated that the MI would fully respect Mexican and international law.[103] As a result, the MI preserved Mexican sovereignty and did not impose a certification process to enforce full compliance with human rights requirements. The plan was ultimately approved by both nations and signed into law in June of 2008.

The MI contains four pillars of action: (1) Disrupt Organized Criminal Groups, (2) Strengthen Institutions, (3) Build a 21st Century Border, and (4) Build Strong and Resilient Communities.[104] Under the first pillar, the plan focuses on seizing drug trade, interdicting illegal arms trafficking, and intelligence exchange between the two governments. The second pillar focuses on criminal justice reforms in Mexico, including professionalization of police and prosecutors, systems development, reform of existing corrections infrastructure and policy, and professional exchanges to increase Mexican capacity to fight organized crime. Pillar three incorporates the professionalization of Mexican police and federal forces exhibited in pillar two, along with U.S. aid, to obtain more sophisticated and less intrusive technology. The final pillar highlights the importance of demand reduction for illegal drugs through stronger communities that can better resist the effects of illegal trafficking, while promoting a "culture of lawfulness" that is (in theory) impervious to the temptations of such illicit behavior.[105] Additionally, the MI provides additional U.S. resources to Mexican authorities, primarily in the form of technical trainers for the aforementioned professionalization, funds and technology to reinforce communications systems and networks that gather information on drug organizations, as well as multiple helicopters and surveillance aircraft for use in interdiction operations.[106]

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103 U.S. Congress, House of Representatives. Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009 Committee Print of the Committee on Appropriations. 111. 1 sess.(March 11, 2009): H.R. 1105.

104 Statement, U.S. Department of State, The Mérida Initiative: Expanding the U.S./Mexico Partnership, Fact Sheet, 2008.

105 Ibid.

106 Statement, U.S. Department of State, The Mérida Initiative, Fact Sheet, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, June 23, 2009.

Based on the Congressional reports and their findings discussed above concerning a heightened awareness for the threat posed by illegal drug trafficking and its connections to terrorism, we can overlay this information to the monies allocated to the MI. In doing so, we will be able to understand which elements of the plan were most important based on their level of funding. Table 1 shows the initial breakdown of funds requested for the program for fiscal years 2008 and 2009, the first two years of establishment and execution of the MI.

Table 1. Mérida Initiative Funding Request by Program Components ($ in millions)[107]

| Type of Funding | FY2008 Supplemental Request (Mexico) | FY2008 Supplemental Request (Central America) | FY2009 Request (Mexico) | FY2009 Request (Central America) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Counternarcotics, Counterterrorism, and Border Security | 306.3 | 16.6 | 238.3 | 40.0 |
| Public Security and Law Enforcement | 56.1 | 25.7 | 158.5 | 32.0 |
| Institution Building and Rule of Law | 100.6 | 7.7 | 30.7 | 23.0 |
| Program Support | 37.0 | — | 22.5 | 5.0 |
| Total | 500.0 | 50.0 | 450.0 | 100.0 |

**Sources:** U.S. Department of State briefing paper provided to Congressional offices; U.S. Department of State, Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, FY2009.

From the table, we can see that the bulk of the funding went to provide resources for Mexico, most notably its efforts in the avenues of counter-narcotics, counterterrorism, border security, and public security and law enforcement. Seventy-two percent ($362.4

107 Ibid., 2.

million) of the total funding ($500 million) for MI operations is focused in areas typical to SS counter-narcotics efforts, such as interdiction and eradication. Conversely, only twenty-eight percent ($137.6 million) was allocated for building and strengthening support structures such as institution building and program support. Additional reports, such as the FY2008 Supplemental Appropriations Act, H.R. 2642 (P.L. 110–252) show that the United States would transfer Mexico $352 million in FY2008 (supplemental assistance) and $48 million in FY2009 (bridge fund supplemental assistance), again most notably in the areas given the greatest attention: counter-narcotics and counterterrorism.[108] The largest portion of MI resources, not surprisingly, is focused on the direct action areas of counter-narcotics.

## E. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter has analyzed the origins of the MI by examining the impact of Plan Colombia and other related efforts in the region. Past counter-narcotics history with Colombia influenced U.S. decisions to include measures in the MI beyond the scope of normal SS tactics. In an effort to avoid some of the human rights violations encountered under Plan Colombia, these new measures were included to ensure a more comprehensive response to the threat posed by illegal narcotics trafficking. Further, the measures were intended to address both societal issues within Mexican culture and immigration, as well as a restructuring of the capabilities of police and judiciary forces to deal with the influx of drug-related crime. Likewise, I have emphasized how the MI was approved in the context dominated by 9/11 concerns, in which government officials linked anti-terrorist policies to anti-narcotics efforts. Heightened awareness and concern for national security pushed the United States to group the two concepts and as a result, the MI's funding concentrated on direct action elements of the plan; namely, interdiction and eradication. The increased sense of urgency resulting from terrorist attacks urged the United States to provide a rapid, concentrated response. It also caused the United States to reevaluate its partnership with Mexico, considering the shared threat of drug trafficking by the two nations.

108 FY2008 Supplemental Appropriations Act, Public Law 110–252, 122 Stat. 2323 (JUNE 30, 2008): 1409, 2339.

I have also analyzed how the Mexican involvement shaped the final composition of the MI. Without the request and persistent efforts of Mexican legislature, the MI may never have been fully approved. Mexican legislature worked not only to improve its relationship with the United States, but also to create a shared perspective, based on the threat from drug trafficking to both nations. Mexico's efforts to work through contested issues within initial drafts of the MI and achieve a more equitable position with the United States provided a significant presence in the drive to achieve legislative approval. The plan represents a critical juncture in U.S.-Mexico relations, representing a significant advancement of cooperative partnerships in North America to fight drug trafficking. The result of this inter-parliamentary discourse between the respective nations was a plan that addressed the scope of drug trafficking, from interdiction and social welfare to judicial procedure. This finalized plan showed the intentions and commitment of each nation to wholeheartedly provide assets and effort to fight a combined international campaign. Despite the efforts of Mexico and the United States to establish a comprehensive plan to fight drug trafficking, the overall appropriation and timeliness of funds prevented it from having strong mechanisms for accountability and transparency. The next chapter will discuss the implementation and effectiveness of the MI.

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# III. IMPLEMENTATION, SHAPE OF THE INITIATIVE, AND RESULTS

In order to properly ascertain the impact of counter-narcotics operations under the Mérida Initiative (MI), this thesis will consider two periods: 2007–2008 and 2009–2010. Two factors greatly affected the impact of the MI: timing and shape (as a function of funding). According to Congressional Research reports, the MI was only first intended to be a three-year program, with funding to "begin in [Fiscal Year] FY2008 and last through FY2010."[109] This thesis examines international and U.S. trends in drug markets during these years. Primary concern is given to the impact of funding in shaping the MI, as well as how the timing of resources affected the effectiveness of the campaign. The first period represents the start of the MI, as forces were only beginning to coalesce under the cooperative Mexico/U.S. umbrella of operations. The second period represents the first two years in which the MI assets should have been largely implemented and provides an adequate example of the effects of a fully working program. Comparisons of drug trends within the two periods will provide a more thorough understanding of the impact of the MI on the trafficking of illegal narcotics. This is important because Mexico is one of the largest producers and shipping routes for illicit drugs, and the United States is the largest consumer in the world. According to the edict of supply-side counter-drug logic, if the MI was successful, then drug prices should increase and usage and purity decline.[110] Conversely, if MI actions have been ineffective, then the reverse relationship should prevail.

## A. WHERE DID THE MONEY GO? WHAT EFFECT DID THIS HAVE?

As discussed in Chapter II, initial funding for the MI was focused more toward typical supply-side procedures, including interdiction and eradication. In considering this

109 U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues, by Clare R. Seelke and June S. Beittel, CRS Report RL12345 (Washington, DC: Office of Congressional Information and Publishing, August 21, 2010), 2.

110 Coletta Youngers and Eileen Rosin. "The U.S. 'War on Drugs': Its Impact in Latin America and the Caribbean." In Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy, 1–13. Boulder: L. Rienner, 2005, 3.

relationship between funding and the shape of the MI, we must examine the timeliness of resource application, based on procured assets. Table 2 shows that funding for the MI was not largely achieved until after the end of the FY09 cycle.[111] In fact, according to information supplied by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) in Table 2, the obligated balance, representing unliquidated contract amounts, was not fully expended until 2009.

Table 2. Initiative Funding Status as of September 30, 2009[112] ($ in millions)

| Funding Source | Appropriated[a] | Obligated Balance[b] | Expended Balance[c] |
|---|---|---|---|
| FY08 Supplemental | $400.0 | 375.1 | 24.2 |
| FY09 Omnibus | 300.0 | 41.0 | 0 |
| FY09 Supplemental | 420.0 | 336.5 | 0 |
| Total for Mexico | $1,120 | $752.6 | $24.2 |

*Source***:** GAO Report GAO-10–253R, *Status of Funds for the Mérida Initiative*

**Note:** Appropriated funds give budget authority to incur obligations and to make payments from the Treasury for specified purposes. Obligations are commitments that create a legal liability of the United States government for the payment of goods and services ordered or received. Expenditures are funds that have been spent.

[a] Includes amounts appropriated "to combat drug trafficking and related violence and organized crime, and for judicial reform, institution building, anti-corruption, rule of law activities" in these countries, amounts Congressionally directed for programs in these countries, and amounts allocated by State to fund MI activities. For the purposes of this report, we consider "to combat drug trafficking and related violence and organized crime, and for judicial reform, institution building, anti-corruption, rule of law activities" to be MI activities.

[b] Although the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) reports both its bulk obligations and sub-obligations to the Office of Management and Budget, its bulk obligations, as the first record of a legal liability to pay for goods and services, are what we are reporting as its obligations. Obligated balance refers to unliquidated obligations.

[c] In the FY2008 Supplemental Appropriations Act (Pub. L. No. 110–252), Congress appropriated $352 million into various accounts "to combat drug trafficking and related violence and organized crime, and for judicial reform, institution building, anti-corruption, rule of law activities" in Mexico during the first year of the MI, in addition to $48 million for the same purposes during the second year of the MI, which is referred to as the FY2009 Supplemental Bridge.

111 Jess T. Ford, United States and Government Accountability Office. "Status of Funds for the Mérida Initiative." U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-10–253R.

112 Ibid., 7.

Specifically, this information shows that of the $1.12 billion appropriated to Mexico for the MI, only 33 percent of the obligated funds (via contracts) were fulfilled by 2009. This means that approximately 67 percent ($752.6 million) of those contracts under obligation were still awaiting liquidation to purchase assets. This has three important ramifications. First, this reduces the effectiveness of Mexican operatives to bring the full weight of their respective agencies to bear upon criminals within the organizations trafficking in illegal narcotics. According to a 2010 memorandum from U.S. Congressional representative Chris Smith to the Senate Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, "only nine percent of the $1.6 billion promised under the MI from 2008 to 2010 has actually been spent, and little more than forty-six percent of the funds have been obligated."[113] Mexican personnel did not receive the majority of equipment and training mandated by the MI until the fall of 2009, as shown in Table 3.[114] Further reports to Congress show that crucial assets, such as the "biometric equipment, immigration computer equipment and software, forensics lab equipment, and canines" were not fully accessible to Mexican forces until the spring of 2010.[115] Even direct line items initially delineated for the campaign, such as the Bell helicopters for the Mexican Army, took over a year to procure after the initial appropriation of funds for the MI, as shown in Table 4.[116] Considering that a major goal for the Mexican Army was interdiction and eradication via aerial means, this severely limited its ability to execute a primary objective of the MI.

113 Chris Smith. Assessing the Merida Initiative: Report from the GAO, edited by Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere Government Printing Office, 2010, 39.

114 United States Government Accountability Office. Merida Initiative: The United States Has Provided Counternarcotics and Anticrime Support but Needs Better Performance Measures: Report to Congressional Requesters. Washington, DC: U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, 2010, http://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo9923, 8.

115 Jess T. Ford, United States Congress House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere and United States Government Accountability Office. "Mérida Initiative the United States Needs Better Performance Measures for Its Counternarcotics and Anticrime Support Efforts: Testimony before the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives." U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, 2.

116 Jess T. Ford, United States and Government Accountability Office. "Status of Funds for the Mérida Initiative." U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS120026, 13.

Table 3. Selected Equipment and Training Delivered Under the Mérida Initiative, as of March 31, 2010[117]

| Equipment | Delivery date |
|---|---|
| 26 armored vehicles | May 2009 |
| 62 Plataforma Mexico computer servers | June 2009 |
| Training equipment | Jul. & Dec. 2009 |
| 5 X-ray vans | August 2009 |
| OASISS servers and software | August 2009 |
| Biometric equipment | Sept. 2009 & Jan. 2010 |
| Document verification software | September 2009 |
| Ballistic tracing equipment (IBIS) | September 2009 |
| 30 ion scanners | October 2009 |
| Rescue communication equipment & training | Oct. & Nov. 2009 |
| Personal protective equipment | Oct. & Nov. 2009 |
| 5 Bell helicopters | December 2009 |
| 10 Mobile X-ray minivans | December 2009 |
| Constanza software | February 2010 |
| 100 Polygraph units | March 2010 |
| 13 armored Suburbans | April 2010 |
| Training | |
| 230 officials attending arms trafficking conferences | April to Oct. 2009 |
| 187 Mexican Ministry of Public Safety (SSP) officers trained in corrections instruction and classification | April to Dec. 2009 |
| United Nation's human rights project inaugurated | July 2009 |
| 4,392 SSP investigators trained | Jul. 2009 to Jan. 2010 |
| USAID training for capacity building programs throughout Mexico for over 10,000 Mexican officials in the following areas:<br>-Citizen participation councils<br>-Victim protection and restitution<br>-Judicial exchanges<br>-Trafficking in persons<br>-Human rights<br>-Pre-trial services and case resolution alternatives<br>-Continuing education for police, prosecutors and other officials<br>-Penal reform | Aug.2009 to Mar. 2010 |
| Over 200 Mexican prosecutors and investigators trained in trial advocacy, trafficking in persons, and extradition | Sept. 2009 to Mar. 2010 |
| 28 canine trainers trained | Oct. 2009 to Apr. 2010 |
| 293 mid-level and senior-level SSP officers trained | Oct. to Nov. 2009 |
| 45 Mexican state officials trained in anti-kidnapping | Nov.2009 to Jan. 2010 |

*Source*: GAO Reports, GAO-10–253R and GAO-10–837

117 Ibid, 8; Jess T. Ford, United States Government Accountability Office. Merida Initiative: The United States Has Provided Counternarcotics and Anticrime Support but Needs Better Performance Measures: Report to Congressional Requesters. Washington, DC: U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, 2010, http://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo9923, 19; Clare Rebaldo Seelke, Kristin M. Finkle, and Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation the Mérida Initiative and Beyond. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2011, 19–30.

Table 4. Bell Helicopter Delivery Timeline[118]

| Date | Action |
|---|---|
| June 2008 | First Appropriation for $400 million to Mexico |
| September 2008 | First State Spending Plan Approved |
| October 2008 | First Funds Obligated for Helicopters |
| April 2009 | Letter of Offer and Acceptance Implemented |
| June 2009 | Helicopter Contract Signed |
| December 2009 | Estimated Delivery |

*Source*: GAO Report, *Status of Funds for the Mérida Initiative,* GAO-10–253R

As a result of the egregious time-lag in major equipment delivery to Mexican agencies, their overall effectiveness in combatting illicit counter-narcotics organizations was drastically hampered. As previously stated, 2009 was the first true start of funded assets arriving in the field, but what is staggering is that this delay in equipping MI forces caused larger secondary effects that impacted readiness. Since forces working under the MI did not receive the majority of their equipment and training until after the spring of 2009, they were still in the process of learning to adjust to that technology and training until well into 2010. Thus, personnel working under the umbrella of the MI were unable to effectively impact the drug trade until almost three years after the initial approval of the plan, approaching the end of the originally intended campaign.

The second ramification, complementary to the first, is that timeliness of implementation depended upon timeliness of delivered assets. Since these assets were reliant upon funding that was slow in arriving, portions of the plan came online according to resource availability, and the overall organization had to readjust to accommodate the new pieces. As a result, this created a crisis of cohesion among units associated with the MI. As previously mentioned, new equipment and training requires a break-in period during which there can be a decidedly steep learning curve. As new techniques and technology are encountered and embraced, reduced proficiency is to be expected, as well as unity of effort, as personnel and units re-learn to perform normal tasks. Table 5 compiles information taken from two GAO reports to Congress and provides a timeline

118 Jess T. Ford, United States and Government Accountability Office. "Status of Funds for the Mérida Initiative." U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS120026, 13.

of MI events in Congressional actions and funding.[119] It shows that the first appropriation for the MI was not completed until June 2008, but funds were not available until October of that year. Table 5 also reflects that second and third appropriations and delayed letters of agreement with Mexico slowed fourth appropriation of fund approvals in U.S. Congress. Additionally, spending plans by the U.S Department of State (DoS) were impeded by human rights reports on the behavior of state and national police and military personnel in Mexico.

Table 5. Mérida Initiative Funding and Documentation Timeline[120]

| Congressional Actions ($ in U.S. dollars) | |
|---|---|
| October 2007 | Mérida Initiative Joint Statement Press Release |
| June 2008 | First Appropriation of Funds |
| October 2008 | First Funds Available for Obligation |
| March 2009 | Second Appropriation of Funds |
| June 2009 | Third Appropriation of Funds |
| December 2009 | Fourth Appropriation of Funds |
| March 2010 | $141 million expended; $734 million obligated |
| Documentation and Reports to Congress | |
| September 2008 | First State Spending Plan Approved |
| December 2008 | First Letter of Agreement Signed with Mexico |
| April 2009 | First Report on Human Rights, Police Transparency, and NGO Cooperation for Central America |
| August 2009 | Second and Third State Spending Plans Approved |
| August 2009 | Second Human Rights Report for Central America |
| August 2009 | First Human Rights Report for Mexico |
| May 2010 | Second Letter of Agreement Signed with Mexico |

*Source*: GAO Reports, GAO-10–253R and GAO-10–837

The combination of information from Tables 3 and 5 makes it possible to see how legislative delays in coordination between Mexico and the United States greatly

119 Jess T. Ford, United States and Government Accountability Office. "Status of Funds for the Mérida Initiative." U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS120026, 8; United States Government Accountability Office. Merida Initiative: The United States Has Provided Counternarcotics and Anticrime Support but Needs Better Performance Measures: Report to Congressional Requesters. Washington, DC: U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, 2010. http://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo9923, 19.

120 United States Government Accountability Office. Merida Initiative: The United States Has Provided Counternarcotics and Anticrime Support but Needs Better Performance Measures: Report to Congressional Requesters. Washington, DC: U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, 2012. http://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo9923, 19; United States Government Accountability Office. "Status of Funds for the Mérida Initiative." U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-10–253R, 8.

attributed to a lag in funding support. Delayed funding from inter-parliamentary setbacks staggered the delivery of allocated assets. This ultimately affected the ability of units in the field to properly coordinate with one another and with other agencies. Since MI units were not equipped with their gear, training, and technology until such a late date, they were unable to present a unified front against illegal trafficking. Personnel require time in order to adapt to new equipment, not only to adjust their own level of proficiency, but also to learn how to move and operate within and across inter-agency lines. The long response in funding provision equated to a reduced level of cohesion and unity of effort for MI forces.

Lastly, major corruption issues and the ever-present threat posed by adaptive criminal elements resulted in an overall degradation in mission capability. In this instance, the specific ability of units to provide timely, cohesive responses to organized crime and trafficking organizations was debilitated. One of the stated intents of the MI is to "go after the cartels and organized crime and the corruption they generate."[121] As such, a major blow was dealt to the Mexican counter-narcotics program when "35 officials and agents from an elite unit within the federal attorney general's office [were] fired or arrested" [122] in October 2008. This elite unit was Mexico's Assistant Attorney General's Office for Special Investigations on Organized Crime (SIEDO), "in charge of probing drug and weapons smuggling as well as kidnapping and terrorism."[123] Arrested members included senior intelligence director Fernando Rivera Hernandez and SIEDO's general technical coordinator, Miguel Colorado Gonzalez.[124] This incident involved "payoffs for sensitive information about antidrug activities" and caused yet another

121 United States Department of State Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. "The Merida Initiative: Expanding the U.S./Mexico Partnership - Fact Sheet," accessed February 6, 2013, http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/fs/2012/187119.htm.

122 U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues, by Clare R. Seelke, CRS Report RL12345 (Washington, DC: Office of Congressional Information and Publishing, August 21, 2010), 19.

123 Tracy Wilkinson, "Drug Cartel Taints Attorney General's Office." Los Angeles Times (LATWP News Service) (CA), 2008.

124 Ibid.

readdressing of policies in vetting counter-narcotics officials.[125] Furthermore, it provided evidence that infiltration can occur when tactical readiness and unity of effort are degraded or completely absent. In addition to a complete reassessment of confirming individual loyalties to the counter-narcotics effort, SIEDO, an agency specifically tasked with combatting trafficking organizations, faced the problem of replacing key leadership positions. The impact of this blow served to show how second-order effects from budgetary delays created associational space in which corruptive influences flourished. In this instance, with SIEDO facing a leadership restructuring, its mission capability essentially reached a standstill until further actions could be taken to ensure personnel allegiances. Hence, SIEDO made evident the costs associated to tactical disarray and absence of unit cohesion, with linkages to delayed resource provision.

Why was funding not appropriated and obligated to the MI in a timely manner? Essentially, this delay was a result of inadequate oversight by DoS authorities, coupled with a lack of measurable milestones and accountability. Three different reports to Congress from the GAO stated that organizational factors in resource management affected the ability of the DoS to effectively allocate funds to the MI.[126] In these reports, the GAO shows that a majority of the problems in jumpstarting the MI were rooted in the complex manner in which the DoS used multiple accounts for funding, along with a nebulous system of checks and balances to provide quality control for the process. Additionally, three complementary reports from the Congressional Research Service (CRS) echoed the above sentiments and concluded that one of the major issues of the MI

125 U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues, by Clare R. Seelke, CRS Report RL12345 (Washington, DC: Office of Congressional Information and Publishing, August 21, 2010), 19.

126 Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives. Assessing the Merida Initiative: A Report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO), Serial no. 111–109. 2nd sess., 2010; Ford, Jess T., United States and Government Accountability Office. "Status of Funds for the Mérida Initiative." U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-10–253R; United States Government Accountability Office. Merida Initiative: The United States Has Provided Counternarcotics and Anticrime Support but Needs Better Performance Measures: Report to Congressional Requesters. Washington, DC: U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, 2012. http://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo9923.

lay in its lack of funding accountability.[127] MI funding is issued from three appropriations: the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) account, the Economic Support Fund (ESF), and the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) account."[128] Each account is administered by a separate bureau within the DoS, but implementation for certain accounts (INCLE, ESF) is accorded to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) (respectively), with overall accountability shared among the latter entities and DoS.[129] It is no wonder that transparency in resource allocation has been cited as subpar, considering this wide dispersion of roles and control.

In summary, delayed funding to the MI caused a reduction in tactical and strategic responsiveness for MI forces, impeded unit functionality by undermining cohesion, and degraded mission capabilities. The delayed funding was not solely a function of availability, but instead a factor of competency, wherein agencies did not effectively administer and implement funding obligation and liquidation. The purse strings for the campaign were not tightly held, but rather were so loosely drawn that the contents were neglected and fell haphazardly, with little or no effective accountability measures. Combining these highlighted failures in resource allocation with the type of funding allocated for the MI, we can see that the overall shape of the campaign was severely slanted toward interdiction and eradication, but without assets to achieve any real success. Allocated resources that focused on primarily supply-side tactics changed the structure of the MI and essentially oriented its mission (in reality) on direct action efforts, while slowly suffocating the plan via resource lag.

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127 U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues, by Clare R. Seelke, CRS Report RL12345 (Washington, DC: Office of Congressional Information and Publishing, August 21, 2010); U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, Colombia: Issues for Congress, by June S. Beittel, CRS Report RL32250 (Washington, DC: Office of Congressional Information and Publishing, November 28, 2012); U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, Latin America and the Caribbean Illicit Drug Trafficking and U.S. Counterdrug Programs, by Clare R. Seelke, Liana S. Wyler, and June S. Beittel, CRS Report RL41215 (Washington, DC: Office of Congressional Information and Publishing, May 12, 2011).

128 Jess T. Ford, United States and Government Accountability Office. "Status of Funds for the Mérida Initiative." U.S. Govt. Accountability Office, http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS120026; http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-10–253R, 9.

129 Ibid.

## B. ILLEGAL NARCOTICS TRENDS

### 1. Comparative Baseline: 2007–2008

The period between 2007 and 2008 provides a legitimate baseline for comparing illicit drug trends in this thesis. Examination of this time frame shows the state of drug prices, cultivation, and abuse prior to the real start of the MI and can be used as a reference point against which to study the campaign's impact. The two drugs that represent the greatest threat in the global field of illegal drug trafficking are cocaine and opiate-based drugs (commonly referred to as heroin), both of which are mainly produced in Latin America. It is worth noting that the use of cannabis products and amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) has made a significant appearance in the world of illegal narcotics and appears to be on the rise. The scope of this thesis will center largely on cocaine, but will also devote discussion to the proliferation of the other aforementioned drugs. The focus on cocaine in this work is important because this particular substance has had much research and as a result provides the greatest wealth of information. It also holds significance because of its connection to production in Latin American and consumption in the United States. Nevertheless, the other types of drugs must not be ignored, because they are inherently intertwined in the drug trade and are useful in displaying trends both in the United States and globally. In order to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the scope of illegal drug trafficking, a brief overview of the major illegal narcotics trends in 2007 and 2008 is required.

Studies by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) show that between 2007 and 2008 the level of coca cultivation in the Andes was quite steady.[130] Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru produced an average of 174,600 hectares (ha)—a large amount not seen since 2001—despite ongoing U.S. cooperative efforts.[131] Additionally, the associated quarterly average retail price of cocaine rose steadily from around $100 dollars per pure gram in the first quarter of 2007 to almost $200 per pure gram by the

130 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2011. New York: United Nations Pub., 2010, 162.

131 Ibid.

final quarter of 2008.[132] The monthly street price for pure cocaine sold in the United States for this period rose from an average of $122 per pure gram in 2007 to $167 per pure gram in 2008, an increase of 36.9 percent.[133] Conversely, during the same period, annual cocaine purity per gram declined steadily from 65 percent in early 2007 to 55 percent by the end of 2008.[134] The doubling of the cocaine price and ten percent reduction in purity in this two-year period is largely reflective of ongoing counter-narcotics operations already underway by the United States and Latin American nations and are not reflective of MI efforts at this juncture. Lastly, to consider the global trends in cocaine production and price requires examination of the second largest drug consumption market: Europe.[135] While monthly averages were not available at the time of this writing, yearly averages were obtained from the United Nation's World Drug Report.[136] The report shows that annual European retail cocaine prices averaged around $198 per pure gram.[137] The report also shows that the average purity per gram of retail cocaine in Europe averaged 42 percent in 2007 and 2008.[138] Lastly, as displayed in Tables 6 and 7, consumption of cocaine remained steady between the two years, both in the United States and Europe.

Other illegal narcotic trends in consumption and production varied between North America and Europe, depending upon the drug, but consumption remained relatively stable in 2007 and 2008, as shown in Table 6. Reasons for comparatively similar rates of

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132 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2011. New York: United Nations Pub., 2011, 110.

133 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2012. New York: United Nations Pub., 2012; United States Internal Revenue Service. "Yearly Average Currency Exchange." United States Internal Revenue Service, 2013.

134 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2011. New York: United Nations Pub., 2011, 110.

135 Ibid., 111.

136 Ibid., 110.

137 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2012. New York: United Nations Pub., 2012; United States Internal Revenue Service. "Yearly Average Currency Exchange." United States Internal Revenue Service, accessed February 4, 2013, http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/International-Taxpayers/Yearly-Average-Currency-Exchange-Rates.

138 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2011. New York: United Nations Pub., 2011, 114.

consumption across this period can in part be explained by an overall rise in the production of certain products, such as opiate crops. These opiate fields grew record crops, averaging a cultivated 224,350 ha in this period; quantities not produced since 2000.[139] Two of the major opiate suppliers to North America are Colombia and Mexico, which produced some of their largest crops since 2001, averaging 11,505 ha in cultivation, and yielding an average of 249 metric tons (mt) of opium between 2007 and 2008.[140] As a result, the total output of heroin into the global market greatly impacted the spread of drug sales in both European and U.S. markets. This market flood helps explain the relatively stable presence of opiates globally, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Annual Prevalent Drug Use in North America and Europe, Age 15–64[141]
(Numbers in millions, with percentages)

| | North America | | Europe | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2007 | 2008 | 2007 | 2008 |
| Cocaine | 6.87 (2.3%) | 6.17 (2.0%) | 4.33–4.6 (0.8%) | 4.57–4.97 (0.8–0.9%) |
| Opiates | 1.31–1.36 (0.4–0.5%) | 1.29–1.38 (0.4–0.5%) | 3.44–4.05 (0.6–0.7%) | 3.29–3.8 (0.6–0.7%) |
| Cannabis | 31.26 (10.5%) | 29.95 (9.9%) | 28.89–29.66 (5.2–5.4%) | 29.37– (5.3–5.4%) |
| ATS | 3.76 (1.3%) | 3.09–3.2 (1.0–1.1%) | 2.43–3.07 (0.4–0.6%) | 2.5–3.19 (0.5–0.6%) |

*Source*: UNODC World Drug Reports for 2009 and 2010

139 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2011. New York: United Nations Pub., 2011, 60.

140 Ibid., 19.

141 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2009. New York: United Nations Pub., 2010; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2010. New York: United Nations Pub., 2011.

Table 7. Annual Prevalent Drug Use in the United States, Age 12 and Older[142]
(Numbers in thousands, with percentages)

| | 2007 | 2008 |
|---|---|---|
| Cocaine | 7,189 (2.9%) | 6,364 (2.5%) |
| Opiates | 366 (0.1%) | 453 (0.2%) |
| Cannabis | 25,085 (10.1%) | 25,768 (10.3%) |
| ATS | 1,343 (0.5%) | 850 (0.3%) |

*Source*: Results from the 2007 and 2008 U.S. National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

While cocaine and opiates present the greatest threats within the global drug market and significance to the scope of this work, cannabis proved to be the most widely abused drug in the world during this time.[143] Cannabis is relatively easy to grow, indoors or outdoors, with very little required to plant it. Despite its preeminence in consumption, cannabis has not garnered the same level of attention as cocaine and heroin because it causes less public health side effects and also carries far lower retail value than any other illicit drug.[144] The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) cited Mexico as producing roughly 4,000 tons of cannabis in 2007 and 7,400 tons in 2008, most of which

142 United States Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. "Results from the 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables." Ann Arbor, Mich. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research Distributor, accessed February 7, 2013, http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2k10ResultsTables/NSDUHTables2007R/HTM/TOC.htm; United States Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. "Results from the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables." Ann Arbor, Mich. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research Distributor, accessed February 7, 2013, http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2k10ResultsTables/NSDUHTables2008R/HTM/TOC.htm.

143 International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). "Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2007." The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), http://www.incb.org/incb/en/publications/annual-reports/annual-report.html, 61.

144 United States Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. "Results from the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables." Ann Arbor, Mich. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research Distributor, accessed February 7, 2013, http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2k10ResultsTables/NSDUHTables2008R/HTM/TOC.htm.

was destined to remain in North America.[145] Of those tons, the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) results show that approximately 25,085 thousand and 102,404 thousand people in the United States used the substance in 2007 and 2008, respectively.[146] The relative ease of cultivating cannabis products further increases the spread of this substance, which can help explain its steady use in Europe in this period as well.

The amphetamine-type stimulants rounds out the list of high-impact illegal drugs in the illicit narcotics industry. Like its contemporaries, ATS abuse has grown alarmingly in the new millennium. Production figures are based on estimates, since its combat did not start until recently (circa 2007). Nevertheless, abuse statistics reveal that usage of amphetamines remained steady in the 2007–08 period, at around 1.3 and 0.5 percent in North American and Europe, respectively (Table 6). Table 7 shows that use specifically in the United States actually decreased from 2007–2008. A 2008 article reveals that while production of ATS increased in Mexico in the years preceding this period, consumption curtail began at the end of 2008, as a direct result of precursor chemical bans in Mexico.[147] Other factors that can explain this sudden reduction include shifts to other drugs, as well as adaptive relocation by manufacturers and traffickers. While reduced consumption on both sides of the Mexico/U.S. border shows linkages with increased measures to prohibit and ban ingredients used in manufacturing ATS, reports show that

145 International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). "Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2007." The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), http://www.incb.org/incb/en/publications/annual-reports/annual-report.html, 63; International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). "Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2008." The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), http://www.incb.org/incb/en/publications/annual-reports/annual-report.html, 67.

146 United States Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. "Results from the 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables." Ann Arbor, Mich. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research Distributor, accessed February 7, 2013, http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2k10ResultsTables/NSDUHTables2007R/HTM/TOC.htm; United States Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. "Results from the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables." Ann Arbor, Mich. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research Distributor, accessed February 7, 2013, http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2k10ResultsTables/NSDUHTables2008R/HTM/TOC.htm.

147 James K. Cunningham, Ietza Bojorquez, Octavio Campollo, Lon-Mu Liu, and Jane Carlisle Maxwell. "Mexico's Methamphetamine Precursor Chemical Interventions: Impacts on Drug Treatment Admissions." Addiction 105, no. 11 (11, 2010): 1973–1983. doi:10.1111/j.1360–0443.2010.03068.x. http://search.ebscohost.com.libproxy.nps.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sih&AN=54287117&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

production and consumption trends were increasing outside of these countries.[148] As Mexico and the United States enacted tougher precursor controls, chemical production shifted into neighboring nations, including Argentina, Guatemala, Honduras, and Peru, demonstrating the "balloon effect"; the phenomenon whereby crop eradication in one nation causes a production increase in another.[149] Additionally, Southeast Asian markets were burgeoned to fill the vacuum caused by the shift in production, aided by less well-established precursor laws. Lastly, with regard to Mexico in particular, the growing incidence of cocaine provides yet more potential evidence as to the decrease in ATS use. During this same time as precursor bans, cocaine and opiate consumption in Mexico showed little variation, and in fact grew slightly in the following year.[150] The combination of better precursor controls, a production vacuum, and available alternative drugs at hand in North America directly contributed to shifts in drug trends.

### 2. Where Change Should Be Perceptible: 2009–2010

If the 2008–2009 period represents the baseline for production and consumption, then the 2009–2010 period represents the time frame in which change should be measurable in this cross-time examination of narcotics trends. If the MI has been effective, then the 2009–10 period should display different values than those in the 2007–08 time frame because the plan's actions should have created a discernible impact on the global and U.S. markets. Table 8 represents the average annual retail street price of cocaine and opiates in the United States and Europe during the four-year period. As previously stated, this work retains a focus on the United States and Europe because they represent the two largest global consumption markets. As such, an examination of their respective price trends should yield viable results in estimating any significant changes in

148 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2009. New York: United Nations, 2010, 120.

149 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2009. New York: United Nations, 2010, 119; Youngers, Coletta and Eileen Rosin. "The U.S. "War on Drugs": Its Impact in Latin America and the Caribbean." In Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy, 1–13. Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 2005, 5.

150 James K. Cunningham, Ietza Bojorquez, Octavio Campollo, Lon-Mu Liu, and Jane Carlisle Maxwell. "Mexico's Methamphetamine Precursor Chemical Interventions: Impacts on Drug Treatment Admissions." Addiction 105, no. 11 (11, 2010): 1973–1983. doi:10.1111/j.1360–0443.2010.03068.x. http://search.ebscohost.com.libproxy.nps.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sih&AN=54287117&site=ehost-live&scope=site, 1978.

price between 2007 and 2010. From Table 8 we can see that the only sector to show a decrease from 2007 to 2010 was that of opiate price in Europe, dropping 9 percent from its annual average in four years. Otherwise, the retail trends in the other three sectors reveal that cocaine increased in price in both markets, including the United States.

Cocaine and opiates displayed different trends in retail price during this time frame, wherein cocaine retail price rose 39 percent in the United States and 51 percent in Europe from 2007 to 2010, while opiate price grew 26 percent in the former but declined by 9 percent in the latter (Table 8). These retail price trends do not display similar patterns to usage (Tables 9 and 10), such as prices dropping in the 2008–2009 period. It is worth noting that lowered opiate prices in Europe in 2010 did correlate with slight decreases in opiate consumption for that year. This data, when compared with our first hypothesis, allows us to examine if the MI has been effective. The first hypothesis states that if MI actions have been effective, we should see a marked increase in the price of illegal narcotics. From the data previously discussed in Table 8, we know that cocaine prices steadily increased in both Europe and the United States during this period. Opiate prices declined in Europe, which could be in part explained by the surplus remnants of opiate crops that flooded the market with record cultivation from 2007 to 2009.[151] If we consider cocaine only, then it would appear the MI has been partially effective, based on our supply-side expectations. Yet, the MI had no evident effect on opiate prices, especially if one focuses on the European market. Since these two areas represent the largest consumption markets in the world, and therefore hold significance in assessing anti-drug effectiveness, we must conclude that the MI has yielded some results in overall price increases.

151 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2011. New York: United Nations Pub., 2011, 60.

Table 8. Average Annual Retail Street Price of Cocaine and Opiates (Per Pure Gram), 2007 through 2010 (Amounts in U.S. Dollars)

| | United States | | | | Europe | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
| Cocaine | $122 | $167 | $186 | $169 | $161 | $235 | $217 | $243 |
| Opiates | $356 | $361 | $385 | $450 | $232 | $246 | $230 | $211 |

*Source*: UNODC World Drug Reports for 2008–2012

Table 9 represents aggregate data for the annual prevalent drug use in North America and Europe, from 2007 through 2010. In North America overall illicit drug use exhibited some fluctuation with respect to cocaine (noticeable decline) and cannabis (slight increase), but averages remained steady in ATS and opiate use. Meanwhile, consumption averages across all four categories remained relatively stable in Europe, with only a minor decrease in opiate usage from 2007 to 2010. Comparing the two periods, there is a minor reduction in cocaine, cannabis, and ATS use in North America between 2008 and 2009, a critical juncture at which MI effectiveness should be discernible. However, aside from cocaine use in North America, this slight deviation does not appear with any lasting significance elsewhere in the four-year span. Specific data for the United States provides a supporting narrative, in which cannabis and cocaine use displayed similar North American levels between 2007–08 and 2009–10, increasing and declining, respectively (Table 10). Opiate consumption in the United States shows a marginal increase in the first two years, but remains steady thereafter. Only cocaine consumption appears to have been negatively affected across this period, as relative stability or marginal increase are visible in the other drugs. Considering this period in two-part comparison and in total, there is little impact reduction to three of the four major drug areas discussed herein.

This analysis allows us to consider the second hypothesis, distinct from and yet still connected with the first, in that price and usage should share an inverse relationship, in line with supply-side theory. We know that in the largess, the MI has proven itself relatively effective at impacting drug prices, as discussed above. But, based on hypothesis two, if MI actions were successful, then a reduction in illicit narcotics consumption should be visible both domestically in the U.S. market and globally. The data listed in Tables 9 and 10 shows that overall consumption varied by area and by drug type. Europe displays relatively stable levels of consumption for the four drug types, with only a slight decrease in opiate consumption. As discussed above, North America and the United States display similar trends, in which only cocaine showed noticeable reduction, while cannabis, opiates, and ATS showed stability or increase. In accordance with the second hypothesis, this stability in three of the four major drug types should not exist. Additionally, the relative stability in Europe across all four years lends further weight against the predicted outcome. Hence, we must conclude that the MI was ineffective in reducing overall drug consumption, because usage was not generally decreased. Some level of credit could plausibly be given to the MI, because of the decreased instance of cocaine use, but this impact is most likely explained by the continued presence of counter-narcotics campaigns that pre-date this particular plan.

Table 9. Annual Prevalent Drug Use in North America and Europe, Age 15–64[152]
(Numbers in millions, with percentages)

| | North America | | | | Europe | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
| Cocaine | 6.87 (2.3%) | 6.17 (2.0%) | 5.69 (1.9%) | 5.0 (1.6%) | 4.33–4.6 (0.8%) | 4.57–4.97 (0.8–0.9%) | 4.3–4.75 (0.8–0.9%) | 4.49–4.87 (0.8%) |
| Opiates | 1.31–1.36 (0.4–0.5%) | 1.29–1.38 (0.4–0.5%) | 1.0–1.63 (0.3–0.5%) | 1.3 (0.4%) | 3.44–4.05 (0.6–0.7%) | 3.29–3.8 (0.6–0.7%) | 3.11–3.47 (0.6%) | 2.83–3.21 (0.5–0.6%) |
| Cannabis | 31.26 (10.5%) | 29.95 (9.9%) | 32.52 (10.7%) | 32.95 (10.8%) | 28.89–29.66 (5.2–5.4%) | 29.37–29.99 (5.3–5.4%) | 28.73–29.25 (5.2–5.3%) | 26.68 (5.2%) |
| ATS | 3.76 (1.3%) | 3.09–3.2 (1.0–1.1%) | 3.46 (1.1%) | 3.92 (1.3%) | 2.43–3.07 (0.4–0.6%) | 2.5–3.19 (0.5–0.6%) | 2.54–3.18 (0.5–0.6%) | 2.3–2.95 (0.4–0.5%) |

*Source*: UNODC World Drug Reports for 2009–2012

152 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2009. New York: United Nations, 2010; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2010. New York: United Nations Pub., 2011.

Table 10. Annual Prevalent Drug Use in the United States, Age 12 and Older[153]
(Numbers in thousands, with percentages)

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cocaine | 7,189 (2.9%) | 6,364 (2.5%) | 5,813 (2.3%) | 5,370 (2.1%) |
| Opiates | 366 (0.1%) | 453 (0.2%) | 605 (0.2%) | 618 (0.2%) |
| Cannabis | 25,085 (10.1%) | 25,768 (10.3%) | 28,521 (11.3%) | 29,206 (11.5%) |
| ATS | 1,343 (0.5%) | 850 (0.3%) | 1,165 (0.5%) | 954 (0.4%) |

*Source*: Results from the U.S. National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 2007–2010

We cannot discuss our last meter for supply-side effectiveness without a brief discussion of product cultivation and production for the two drugs that pose the most danger to counter-narcotics: cocaine and opiates. According to the World Drug Report 2012, coca production declined between the 2007 and 2010. The annual total of coca produced in Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru decreased from 181,600ha in 2007, to 149,200ha in 2010, a loss of 18 percent.[154] In comparing the two periods, the decline was 12 percent between 2007–08 (average of 174,600ha) and 2009–10 (average of 154,000ha).[155] This trend is correlated with decreased use in the United States and North America, as the total supply in the market declined. Conversely, opiate production grew during the four-year period, as the total output of crops in Colombia and Mexico were

153 United States Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. "Results from the 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables." Ann Arbor, Mich. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research Distributor, accessed February 7, 2013, http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2k10ResultsTables/NSDUHTables2007R/HTM/TOC.htm; United States Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. "Results from the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables." Ann Arbor, Mich. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research Distributor, accessed February 7, 2013, http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2k10ResultsTables/NSDUHTables2008R/HTM/TOC.htm.

154 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2012. New York: United Nations, 2012, 35.

155 Ibid., 35.

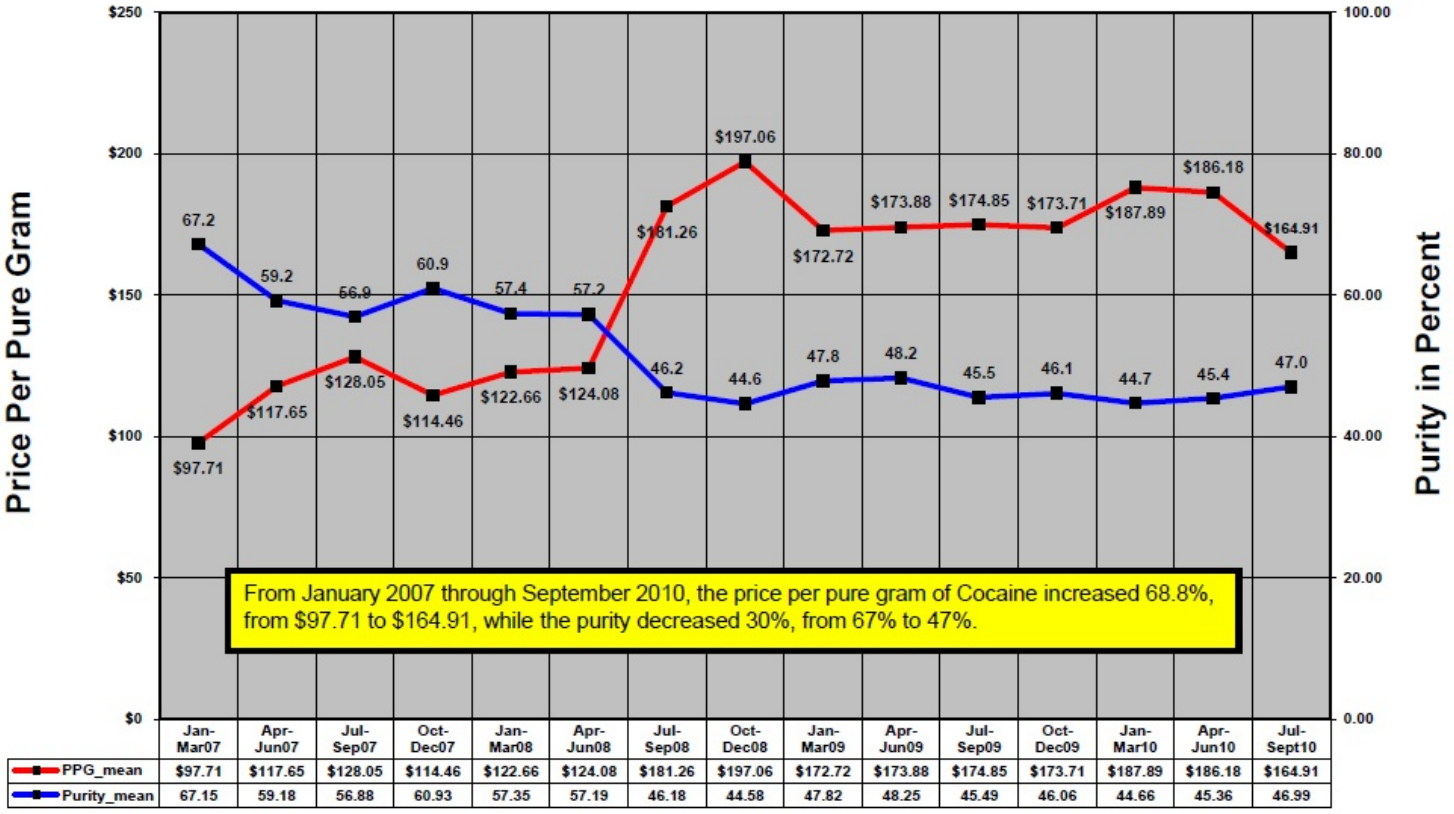
estimated at 54,053 ha, a 135% increase from 2007 to 2010.[156] Considering the two time frames, opiate production in Colombia and Mexico increased by 48 percent between 2007–08 and 2009–10.[157] When taken as a whole, we see a decrease in coca cultivation, but a surge in opiate growth between 2007 and 2010.

Estimates for cocaine purity in the United States vary somewhat between U.S. government statistics and those provided by the United Nations, but the overall picture is similar; namely, that while purity has declined since 2007, it has remained relatively stable through 2010. Specifically, the World Drug Report cites a purity of 85 percent for U.S. cocaine purity in 2007 and claims a steady decline to 73 percent in 2010.[158] In comparison, the U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) reports the 2007 purity of cocaine at almost 70 percent, declining to 47 percent by 2010 (Figure 1). Likewise, a report by the National Forensics Laboratory Information System (NFLIS), an entity utilized by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) chemical analysis, shows similar findings in Texas (Figure 2). The use of Texas serves as a crucial case due to its close proximity to drug trafficking pipelines from Latin America. As such, drug seizures made in that state hold relevance in assessing the purity of illegal narcotics entering the U.S. consumption market. Both figures coincide; the purity of cocaine within the United States has shown a notable decline since 2007, but has maintained relative stability in the following three years.

156 Ibid., 27.

157 Ibid.

158 Ibid., 36.


Price Per Pure Gram
Purity in Percent
$250
$200
$150
$100
$50
$0
100.00
80.00
60.00
40.00
20.00
0.00
From January 2007 through September 2010, the price per pure gram of Cocaine increased 68.8%, from $97.71 to $164.91, while the purity decreased 30%, from 67% to 47%.
Jan-Mar07 Apr-Jun07 Jul-Sep07 Oct-Dec07 Jan-Mar08 Apr-Jun08 Jul-Sep08 Oct-Dec08 Jan-Mar09 Apr-Jun09 Jul-Sep09 Oct-Dec09 Jan-Mar10 Apr-Jun10 Jul-Sept10
PPG_mean $97.71 $117.65 $128.05 $114.46 $122.66 $124.08 $181.26 $197.06 $172.72 $173.88 $174.85 $173.71 $187.89 $186.18 $164.91
Purity_mean 67.15 59.18 56.88 60.93 57.35 57.19 46.18 44.58 47.82 48.25 45.49 46.06 44.66 45.36 46.99

*Source***:** U.S. National Drug Threat Assessment 2011, reproduced with permission granted by U.S. DoJ

Figure 1. Cocaine Price and Purity in the United States, 2007–2010[159]

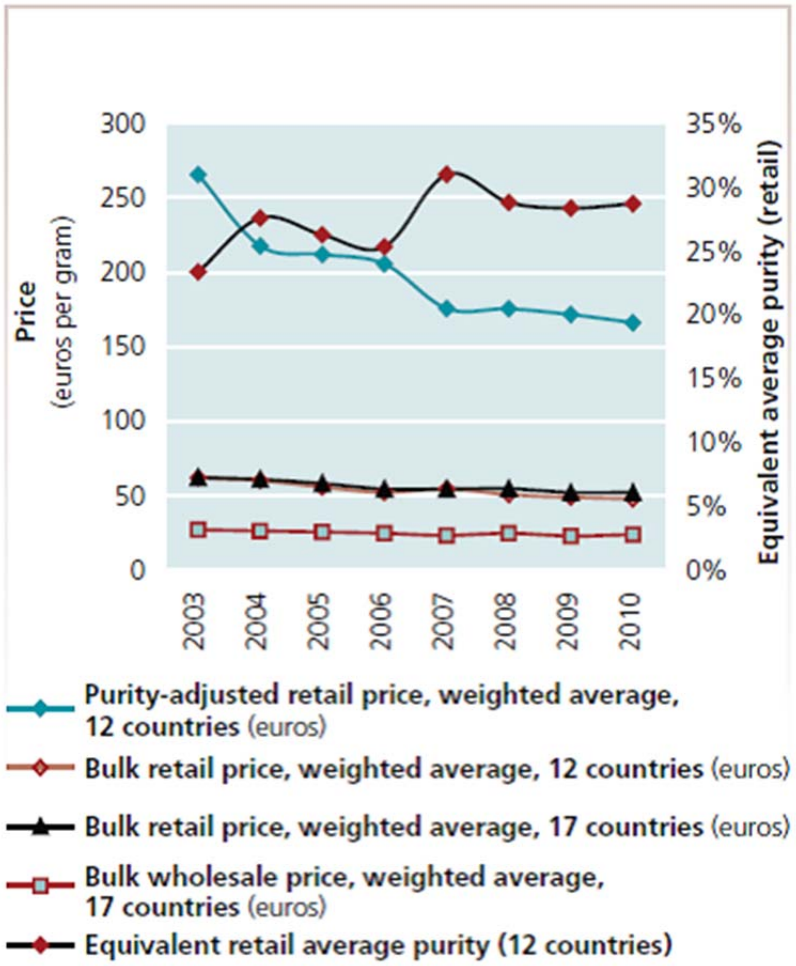
159 "National Drug Threat Assessment 2011." Washington : U.S. Department of Justice : National Drug Intelligence Center, http://www.justice.gov/archive/ndic/pubs44/44849/44849p.pdf, 25.

*Source*: reproduced from the National Forensics Laboratory Information Systems 2011 Annual Report, with permission granted by NFLIS

Figure 2. Cocaine Purity, 2002–2011, Texas[160]

Opiate purity was difficult to determine from reputable sources because while its consumption and trafficking garner major attention in the United States, its level of purity does not. As such, we can still obtain a reasonable estimate of opiate purity by comparing state-level analysis in Texas and European market statistics. As shown in Figures 3 and 4, opiate purity displayed similar trends with cocaine between 2007 and 2010, with a definite downturn after the first year of our time frame. Likewise, it also shows a relatively stable path thereafter through the end of the period in question. From these figures, we can see that both of these illegal narcotics peaked in purity in 2007, but declined thereafter and remained relatively stable across our time frames. Based on this information, we may now review our final hypothesis.

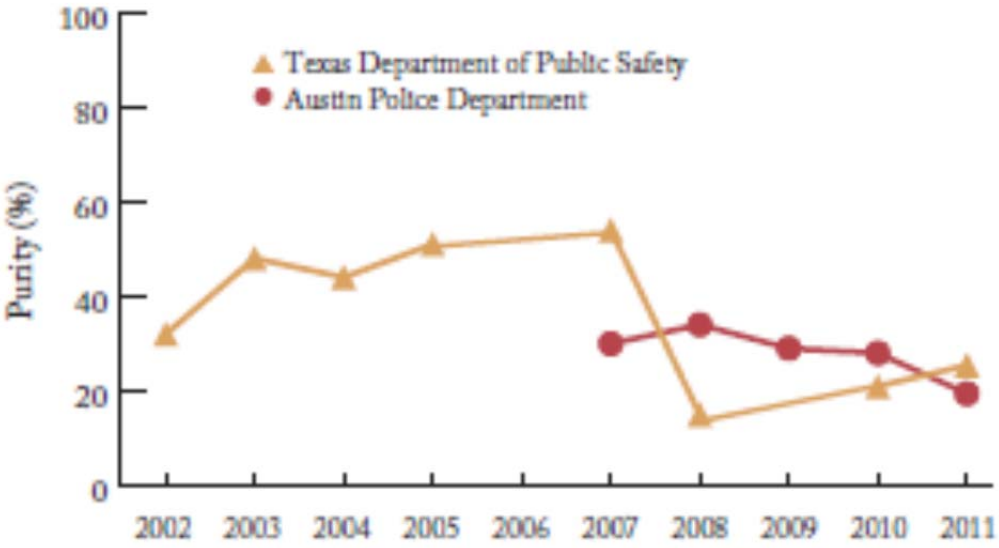
160 United States National Forensics Laboratory. National Forensic Laboratory Information System 2011 Annual Report: U.S. Dept. of Justice Enforcement Administration Office of Diversion Control, 2011, 22.




*Source*: reproduced from the World Drug Report 2012, with permission granted by UNODC

Figure 3. Opiate Prices and Purity in Europe, 2003–2010[161]

161 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2012. New York: United Nations, 2012, 34.




*Source*: reproduced from the National Forensics Laboratory Information Systems 2011 Annual Report, with permission granted by NFLIS

Figure 4. Opiate Purity, 2002–2011, Texas[162]

Hypothesis three provides a counter-perspective to the former hypotheses, positing that if MI actions have been ineffective, then we should see no evident changes in drug prices and usage, or a decrease in both, as well as stable or increased illegal drug purity. This follows the form of previously highlighted supply-side edict: that supply reduction, greater interdiction, and stiffer penalties for drug use will decrease their prevalence among users, by applying the alternate outcome, in which the dependent variables (use and price) are negatively affected. So, in order for this hypothesis to be true, the information and research should show that drug prices did not increase and consumption and purity did not decrease. Based on the information discussed previously in this chapter, we already know that, indeed, illegal narcotic price rose rather dramatically between 2007–08 and 2009–10. Therefore, this hypothesis is already in jeopardy because the first requirement (price stability or reduction) has not been met. In considering illegal narcotic consumption, the data reveals a noticeable stability in usage of the four major drug areas in Europe the United States, with the exception of cocaine.

162 United States National Forensics Laboratory. National Forensic Laboratory Information System 2011 Annual Report: U.S. Dept. of Justice Enforcement Administration Office of Diversion Control, 2011, 22.

So in this instance, the MI at best could only be given claim to partial credit for impacting illegal drug trafficking. It is apparent that overall stable consumption stands as a sign of ineffectiveness, and in that aspect, this hypothesis is proven true. Lastly, the purity of both cocaine and opiates peaked in 2007, but declined thereafter and maintained a fairly stable position throughout the next three years. Comparing the two periods, it appears that the MI provided no real contribution to impacting the purity of these two substances, as there is no real shift in trends between 2007–08 and 2009–10. If the MI were truly ineffective, then prices would have remained stable or shrunk. Since that was obviously not the case, then this hypothesis cannot achieve all the criteria. Hence, we must conclude that the results for this hypothesis are inconclusive, due to the rise in prices.

## C. SUMMARY REMARKS

In this chapter, I have discussed the overall implementation of the MI. I have examined how funding appropriation was afforded to the plan, and how those resources were directed to components within the overall structure. Likewise, I have seen how the focus of funding on supply-side areas, like interdiction and eradication, slanted the ultimate efforts of the campaign toward that approach and detracted from soft-side items like infrastructure. Furthermore, the implications of timeliness were discussed, including the impact of delayed funding on the total effectiveness of the MI. Additionally, I have delved into the anti-narcotics history between Colombia and the United States, showing how that relationship served not only as a blueprint for the MI, but also provided lessons learned that influenced its shape. That shape was proven to be more hypothetical than real, as funding and focus shifted away from the humanitarian and societal aspects and toward direct action elements. Lastly, in this chapter I discussed the overall results regarding impact of the MI on drug price, consumption, and purity. In this instance, only one hypothesis was proven true: prices increased on the whole, between the two periods. The other two hypotheses were proven wrong (no broad consumption decrease) or inconclusive. The next section will provide concluding remarks and brief recommendations for the way ahead.

# IV. CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, WAY FORWARD

## A. CONCLUSION

Funding and resources for counter-narcotics programs in Latin America have grown at an alarming rate in the forty years that the war on drugs has been waged. Likewise, the amount of global attention garnered to this topic has skyrocketed, as the expansion of consumption markets made illegal narcotics trafficking a very lucrative field of entrepreneurship. As a result of larger consumption markets and drug-trade expansion, the United States has taken an ever-increasing interest in the major narcotic production and trafficking areas in nearby Latin America. In the new millennium, the United States has continued to dedicate massive amounts of funds and resources to stem the tide of illegal narcotics entering its borders. These efforts have largely been centered on supply-side (SS) strategies, wherein the goal is to reduce the demand by curtailing the drug supply and imposing a high cost to traffickers and users.[163] Such programs have been carried out in Bolivia, Colombia, the Caribbean, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru, with varying results. Of these nations, Mexico has received a significant portion of U.S. attention and funding in response to the perceived threat posed by illicit narcotics trafficking. The United States and Mexico have shown a collective resolve to address the issues yielded by the illegal drug trade, allocating almost $2 billion to the campaign between 2007 and 2010 via the Mérida Initiative (MI).[164] In contrast, the levels of global consumption and production have been largely unaffected.[165] The continued vitality of the drug enterprise presents an interesting puzzle, considering the ever-increasing amount of funding and resources aligned against it. Since Mexico is one of the global leaders in drug production and the United States is the largest consumption market, how is it that such an illicit industry continues to thrive, despite the apparent best attempts by these two

163 Coletta Youngers and Eileen Rosin. "The U.S. 'War on Drugs': Its Impact in Latin America and the Caribbean." In Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy, 1–13. Boulder: L. Rienner, 2005.

164 U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues, by Clare R. Seelke, CRS Report RL12345 (Washington, DC: Office of Congressional Information and Publishing, August 21, 2010), 8.

165 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2009. New York: United Nations Pub., 2010; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2010. New York: United Nations Pub., 2011.

resource-rich nations? By highlighting the MI, this thesis has strived to address this puzzle and answer the question of the plan's effectiveness at increasing prices and reducing consumption.

The first chapter discussed U.S. intervention in Latin America regarding anti-drug operations, and addressed the aforementioned puzzle presented by the dichotomous nature of drugs and counter-narcotics campaigns. Chapter I also discussed the proposed method of analysis employed in this work, as well as associated problems and hypotheses. In particular, the expected hypotheses included a focus on drug prices, consumption, and purity. This chapter also provided a literature review of prominent academic and institutional work concerning this topic, examining supporter and opponent opinions regarding counter-narcotics programs in the field. Lastly, Chapter I presented a framework for this thesis in order to show the overall progression of this examination; first discussing the historical background of counter-narcotics policies enacted in Latin America, and then working through the creation of the most recent plan, the MI, ending in an examination of its implementation.

The second chapter provided an in-depth review of the historical background of the MI, beginning with Plan Colombia and the experiences of the United States in combatting drug trafficking in Colombia and the Andean Region. This chapter discussed the impact of Plan Colombia on U.S.-led counter-drug campaigns, which ultimately helped shape the MI. Particular scrutiny was given to how lessons learned during Plan Colombia greatly influenced the decisions of U.S. legislature in shaping the MI, to ensure a more comprehensive course of action. The chapter further discussed how the impact of the September 2001 terrorist attacks influenced the MI by providing a security framework, in which efforts to halt organized crime were indeed framed as part of the "new anti-terrorist" strategy. Direct attention was paid to Congressional hearings and discussion concerning the MI, in which counter-narcotics policies were directly and explicitly linked to counterterrorism efforts.

This chapter revealed that a wounded United States, reeling from the terrorist attacks, was extremely eager to respond quickly and effectively to its attackers. However, in the course of responding to terrorism, Washington began to apply similarly high levels

of funding and resources to other security issue-areas, such as counter-narcotics. Ultimately, the U.S. urgency for action eventually slanted funding for the MI, favoring typical SS methods, like interdiction and eradication. Similarly, Chapter II discussed how Mexico has faced an heightened public security threat posed by organized crime, which was evident by the proliferation of drug cartels across its northern border and increased (if not unprecedented) levels of drug-related violence. Chapter II discussed how the combination of U.S. and Mexican security concerns eventually coincided, leading to a common response in the form of a SS program, which resembled the one implemented in Colombia. Chapter II also examined how Mexican imperatives and policy preferences affected the final constitution of the MI, leading to its formal approval in 2007. Finally, the chapter provided an overview of the MI's final structure, including its four pillars and the associated underpinnings for interdiction, eradication, and judiciary infrastructure reform. In sum, despite the effort of both nations to provide a comprehensive response to drug trafficking, the focus of initial funding appropriations, combined with heightened U.S. insecurity and Mexican sovereignty concerns, skewed the end result of the plan back toward a historically SS based strategy.

Chapter III focused its attention on the implementation of the MI, including the impact of funding, as well as the campaign's effectiveness in affecting drug trends. The chapter demonstrated that funding delays undermined effectiveness in three ways: (1) it reduced the capability of agencies to bring complete forces to bear in the campaign, (2) it fostered piecemeal and staggered activation of forces and, (3) it eroded cohesion and unity by exposing Mexican forces to further deterioration and corruption from drug trafficking organizations.

Chapter III also analyzed the plan's effectiveness in impacting drug trends by comparing relevant data in consumption, price, and purity from 2007 to 2010. Special attention was placed on the analysis of data regarding cocaine and opiates, as these are the two drugs that posed the greatest influence in the global narcotics market. Data from official sources indicated that prices for cocaine in global markets increased between 2007 and 2010, while opiate prices fell only in Europe, explained in part by the surplus remnants of opiate crops that flooded the market with record cultivation from 2007 to

2009.[166] This would indicate that our first hypothesis, regarding MI effectiveness in increasing drug prices, was confirmed. On the other hand, the data on drug consumption indicated that cocaine use declined in both North America and the United States, between 2007 and 2010. In contrast, opiate use remained steady for both areas during this time frame. Additionally, European markets showed relative stability for both substances across the four-year period. This suggests that hypothesis two, evaluating cocaine and opiate consumption, was not confirmed, since the data revealed no significant broad decrease in usage. Finally, the evidence on price, consumption, and purity suggests that hypothesis three, concerning MI ineffectiveness, was inconclusive. This hypothesis considered a counter-perspective from the first two, in which MI ineffectiveness would be proven by the existence of stable or decreased prices, and stable or increased consumption and purity. Higher cocaine prices combined with steady consumption and purity did not provide this work with grounds to confirm this hypothesis; ultimately, only one of the three hypotheses was confirmed.

## B. RECOMMENDATIONS, WAY FORWARD

Given what we know about the MI and its impact thus far, we can see that it was not largely effective at reducing the global level of illegal narcotics consumption via SS means, despite dedicating such vast resources and funding to the effort. As such, this author recommends that U.S. and Mexican legislature consider shifting their focus toward demand reduction efforts in place of largely SS strategies. In doing so, they should give attention to decriminalizing illegal narcotics consumption and work to address associated societal issues. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine all alternatives, we can still give brief mention to some prominent counter-perspectives and highlight relevant associated literature. One notable source, the Global Commission on Drug Policy (GCDP), shared this author's sentiment in a 2011 report speaking to this issue.[167] The GCDP, whose commission includes three former Latin American presidents

166 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report 2011. New York: United Nations Pub., 2011, 60.

167 War on Drugs Report of the Global Commission on Drug Policy. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Global Commission on Drugs, 2011.

and several former senior UN and U.S. representatives, agreed that the fascination with SS methods must be abandoned in favor of less invasive tactics, since the former policies have largely failed. In the report, they call for a complete restructuring of counter-drug efforts, urging world leaders to:

> Begin the transformation of the global drug prohibition regime. Replace drug policies and strategies driven by ideology and political convenience with fiscally responsible policies and strategies grounded in science, health, security and human rights – and adopt appropriate criteria for their evaluation.[168]

This report highlights demand-side focus areas, citing three European case studies that utilized demand and harm reduction to significantly impact consumption and associated crime and health costs. The report shows that in the Netherlands, United Kingdom, and Switzerland, the decriminalization of drug use and provision of treatment (and in some cases legal substitution) by the respective governments yielded great success in reducing overall consumption, in particular for first time and repeat users.[169] Additionally, this report calls for the international community to remove the taboo of debating drug policy reform and allow for new avenues to be paved to consider approaches to this topic that do not rely solely on direct action tactics like interdiction and eradication.

Other reports and testimony echo portions of this sentiment, agreeing that current counter-narcotics policies are failing to win the war on drugs and new measures should be undertaken. In particular, a 2011 report by Peter Hakim, president emeritus and senior fellow of the Inter-American Dialogue, suggests six initiatives to reform U.S. counter-narcotics policy.[170] Hakim recommends increased legislative support to establish a commission to review current U.S. anti-drug policies and provide "alternate domestic and international approaches"[171] to counter-narcotics. He urges the United States to work

168 Ibid., 3.

169 Ibid., 7.

170 Peter Hakim, Inter-American Dialogue (Organization), and Beckley Foundation., Rethinking U.S. Drug Policy. Oxford, England: Beckley Foundation, 2011.

171 Ibid., 3.

purposefully with Latin American nations to substantially increase cooperation in addressing counter-narcotics, including intelligence collection and sharing. Hakim also recommends that U.S. legislature allocate funding to study economic, health, and social facets of drug consumption, and make the findings available for international review. Lastly, his report calls for "drug programs and initiatives at the community, state, and federal levels that promise real benefits in… reducing drug addiction and the health risks of addicts, increasing ... rehabilitation and decreasing drug related crimes."[172] Each initiative has its own respective focus, but their collective goal is to affect a more comprehensive revision of all current U.S. drug policies and a broader expansion of discourse into the international arena, since the drug trade is a global epidemic. [173]

Likewise, a 2009 report by the Latin American Commission on Drugs and Policy cites the rising violence associated with drug trafficking as another significant reason to review current counter-drug policies.[174] The Commission argues that the United States should assess the successes and pitfalls of current campaigns and readjust future policies to include demand-side elements. The Commission does not seek to disregard past policies, but favors a new approach that provides a truly comprehensive response to illegal narcotics. Looking to the future, the Commission states that: "The way forward lies in acknowledging the insufficient results of current policies and, without dismissing the immense efforts undertaken, launching a broad debate about alternative strategies."[175] From this hearing, it is apparent that debate for alternate policies continues to encounter resistance in Congress, but the other hearings reveal that acceptance of this discussion is on the rise. Congressional testimony in 2010 to the Subcommittee on Domestic Policy, shows that even the United States has contributed dialogue to policy reform, albeit sparingly.[176] These Congressional hearings show that the steady increase of drug-related

172 Ibid.

173 Ibid., 3.

174 Latin American Commission on Drugs and Policy. Drugs and Democracy: Toward a Paradigm Shift: Latin American Commission on Drugs and Democracy, 2009.

175 Ibid., 6.

176 United States Congress House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. Quitting Hard Habits: Efforts to Expand and Improve Alternatives to Incarceration for Drug-Involved Offenders. 111th Cong., 2nd sess., 2011.

incarceration since 1980 has placed a great fiscal burden on U.S. state penal systems across the nation, forcing legislators to consider alternate policies.[177] The convening of this hearing was significant because it was "the first congressional hearing to consider in a comparative perspective the various efforts within the criminal justice system itself to avoid incarceration and to provide drug treatment."[178] The hearing provides discussion of several state-level programs that provide alternative sentencing and treatment for non-violent and first-time offenders. The testimony shows that reducing strict penalties for this type of offender could greatly alleviate judicial and penal funding requirements, which could be used in implementing alternative plans. The overall theme of these hearings is clear: SS tactics should be reevaluated immediately.

Preliminary results from the research data suggest that SS programs are ineffective, at least in the short-term. If SS programs are apparently insufficient to the task of impacting illegal narcotics, perhaps the United States should consider demand-side programs instead. From this perspective, anti-drug consumption policies should be reviewed, including decriminalization of use and a focus on health-related programs for addicts. Studies suggesting the way forward in the United States already exist, with particular attention to demand-side factors, including one notable report by the GCDP in 2011. The report shows that demand-side methods like drug dependence treatment have a solid return on resources invested, as evidenced in Zurich, Switzerland, where such programs reduced consumption by 4 percent each year, from 1990 to 2002.[179] Additionally, the study showed that "other benefits observed included reductions in: HIV infections; drug overdose deaths; crime and the quantity of heroin seized in the city."[180] A similar article by Mark Klieman examines the failure of current SS procedures, presenting supportive information for alternative programs that have highly successful

177 Ibid., 2.

178 Ibid.

179 Carlos Nordt and Rudolf Stohler, "Incidence of Heroin Use in Zurich, Switzerland: A Treatment Case Register Analysis." Lancet 367, no. 9525 (June 3, 2006): 1830–1834. http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140–6736%2806%2968804–1/.

180 Alek Wodak, Demand Reduction and Harm Reduction: Working Paper for the First Meeting of the Global Commission on Drug Policies, Geneva, Switzerland: Global Commission on Drug Policies, 2011, 4.

records.[181] Kleiman supports alternate methods including less severe penalties for consumption and targeted police action for violent drug dealers. Among these programs, he lists the Hawaiian HOPE program, citing its ability to provide less-severe punishments for repeat offenders, including limited jail time and frequent urinalysis. He shows that the 80 percent success rate of such programs not only gets long-term ATS users to quit, but also gets them "out of confinement in less than one year."[182] This method stems from the idea that less-expensive, less-punitive actions lead to a greater instance of their implementation. Essentially, less-punitive actions are more cost-effective and since they are likelier to be utilized, they provide a higher level of success. The existence of such scholarly research into the field of alternate methods provides hope that such methods can be successfully utilized, with benefits to social health, crime, and reduced funding.

In summary, the arguable success of SS strategies thus far provides enough evidence to feasibly consider reviewing current policy and incorporating a wider array of tactics, including treatment and decriminalization. The way forward requires a critical examination of interdiction and eradication policies. For too long the U.S. has pursued SS policies that often yield unintended consequences or simply fail to accomplish its stated goals. As argued by Coletta Youngers, "reducing supply will make the illicit drug trade more dangerous and costly. This in turn is assumed to drive down production, drive up prices, and ultimately discourage… citizens from buying and using illicit drugs."[183] If current SS policies are continued, then we must recommend more time for researchers to examine this topic. Over a decade passed before the effects and consequences were clearly visible and this may be the same for the MI. Additionally, increased time to examine this topic will yield greater, more reliable results as to the long-term effects of the MI in affecting price and consumption, as this policy is adjusted in future revisions. This will provide a greater scope as to the lasting, if any, positive effects of this campaign.

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181 Mark A. Kleiman, "Surgical Strikes in the Drug Wars : Smarter Policies for both Sides of the Border." In Foreign Affairs Vol. 90, no. 5, p, 2011.

182 Ibid., 4.

183 Coletta Youngers and Eileen Rosin, "The U.S. 'War on Drugs': Its Impact in Latin America and the Caribbean." In Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy, Boulder: L. Rienner, 2005.

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